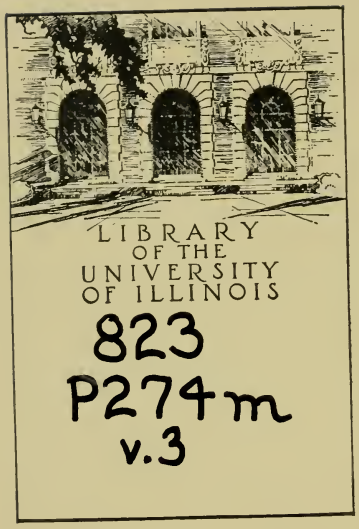
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THE

MAMELUKES:

A ROMANCE OF LIFE IN GRAND CAIRO.

BY

A. A. PATON,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF THE ADRIATIC;" "SERVIA, THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN FAMILY;" AND "THE MODERN SYRIANS."

"What we greedily seek for in poems, travels, romances, is the picture of a state of society unlike the regularity of our own."—GUIZOT.

"The guests assembled from different quarters, and following different professions, formed in language, manners, and sentiments a curious contrast to each other, not indifferent to those who desired to possess a knowledge of mankind in its varieties."—*Rob Roy.*

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THE MAMELUKES:

A ROMANCE OF LIFE IN GRAND CAIRO.

CHAPTER I.

THE WALY.

The house of the Waly, or superintendent of the police of Cairo, was dark and dirty, from the great number of persons who, for the ends of justice, frequented it, as it was open during all hours of the night; and just before sunrise on the morning after the departure of the Emir Yahia from Cairo, several persons were asleep in the porch, while a man, just within the court-yard, was receiving instructions from a police officer. This was the Crier, about to start on

his round through the streets of the metropolis. A constant conversation was carried on, which did not disturb the sleepers; and the interlocutors were Selim Aga, just come from the desert, the police officer, and Habzalam-el-Hafeef, or Absalom the Nimble, the best Bassass in Cairo. The Bassass, I must inform my reader, is a detective policeman, who makes himself thoroughly master of the haunts and persons of all evil-doers. This man, formerly a ropemaker, was now one of the most active scouts of the Waly. A thick neck and broad shoulders showed a vigorous animal nature; but eyes, that twinkled with cunning, revealed the sharpening of his wits at the expense of his moral nature.

"Was this escape all planned?" said Selim Aga.

"All planned, of course," said Absalom the Nimble; "how was it otherwise possible for Nasif Bey to escape so clean?"

"And what news from the castle?" said Selim Aga.

"The jailor has been beaten to within an

inch of his life," said Absalom the Nimble, "to see if he was in the plot; but he foamed at the mouth, and cried out, 'I testify to God I know nothing!' but great measures have been taken; all the gates have been watched, and he cannot escape being ultimately taken."

"There is the *Fejer*," said the Crier, as the first peep of dawn enabled the gossips in the porch to distinguish the red and white stripes on the opposite houses; on which they all washed feet and hands in the trough of the court-yard, and said prayers.

"What are you going to do?" said Selim Aga to the Crier.

"To cry the Bey," said he; "I may just as well begin here;" and going out into the street, cried in a solemn clear voice, "Power is the attribute of God—the Unique—the Victorious! Nasif Bey is degraded."*

On this the sleepers were roused, and rose rubbing their eyes, while Absalom the Nimble and Selim Aga, as day gradually dawned, sat

* In the original El-mulk l'Illah-el-Wahad-el-Kaher Nasif-Bek Mazool.

on the seat of each portal cheek, remarking the women that passed with market necessaries at this early hour, and exchanging obscene jests with each other, although they had just finished prayers.

The strange muzzle of Sheikh Hamood was now seen to make its appearance in the street, and he said, "Peace upon you!" to which the loungers at the door answered, "On you be peace!"

"You people are making yourselves merry; the men of the Waly keep Cairo in order, but who keeps in order the men of the Waly?" said Hamood, with a coarse familiarity of expression.

"Not Sheikh Hamood, surely, who goes out into gardens with children and loses them, and is only saved from being drubbed at the express wish of Sheikh Cassim," said the Cavass.

"Have I missed a day in coming to inquire if the boy was found again? What news?—found or unfound?"

"Unfound," said the Cavass.

"There is no power but in God Almighty," said Hamood, looking serious and impressive, really regretting that the child had not been found, but at the same time pretending to look more struck than he really was.

At this moment, Sheikh Cassim, mounted on his strong ass, stopped at the door of the Waly's house, but it required a second look of those who had known him previously, to discover in the individual who alighted from the ass, the same person who a few weeks before was one of the jolliest and most prosperous-looking men in Cairo. The serenity that dwelt in his look had taken its departure; his round cheeks had become like bags, wan in colour; his eye was glassy; his shoulders had become rounder than before; and his beard, which had been grey, was now become a pure milky white.

"What hope, Cavass?" said he to the officer; "what has transpired?"

"Nothing as yet," said the Cavass; "but all our people are on the alert. *Wallah* Sheikh Cassim," continued he, sympathizingly, "not a man has come to us from the guarded city of

Cairo, for many a long day, that we would sooner assist. Surely you recollect me," said the Cavass, "Jabreh-el-Toweel, that used to come to you with the black Malek of Darfour, in the Khan-el-Turcomany."

"I remember," said Sheikh Cassim; "you had bandaged ankles."

"From rheumatisms," said the Cavass, "caught in Damascus, a country of horrid cold, mud, rain, and humidity. By Allah Effendi, if I could get back your son, I would give every rag upon my body!"

"What a sin," said Sheikh Cassim, "on the head of whoever committed the act! And why have you taken to this life?" continued he to the Cavass, to divert the painful current of his thoughts.

"Because I am an unfortunate man, with a large family and a small income; but I would give every stitch of clothes, and every farthing I have, to get back your son. The rich have their troubles, and the poor their poverty. Thou Veiler of men, my roof is broken through in the Atifet-el-Bakreey, and can I find the

zerrmahboub requisite to repair it? No; that is a sad affair!"

"Be vigilant in seeking my son," said Sheikh Cassim, "and here is a zerrmahboub for your roof, and, when the boy is found, more will follow."

"No!" said the Cavass, with a wave of his hand, and an air of ferocious indignation; "what I do I will do for love of you and love of justice."

"If you love me," said Cassim, quite comprehending his repugnance, "you will not cross my wishes."

"That alters the case," said the Cavass, in a soothed tone, extending his palm; on which he pocketed the zerrmahboub with a rapidity that looked like the prestidigitation of a conjuror.

Osman Effendi now alighted from his horse, and, exchanging a few words with Sheikh Cassim, passed onwards to the room of the Waly, which was a large and magnificent, but now somewhat dilapidated apartment, with a rather shabby divan of crimson cloth, on which

lay a great quantity of paper, and in a corner was the Waly himself, who, having taken no continuous repose for several successive days and nights, was snoring loudly in a corner. As Osman Effendi entered, the clerk told him that he was fatigued, but would awake him; so the servant went up to him, and began to press the soles of his feet, when he suddenly awoke, and, before he could see who was in the room, cried out, "Is Nasif Bey caught?" showing that that affair was uppermost in his mind.

"That is the question I come to put you," said Osman Effendi.

"Oh, Osman Effendi!" said the Waly, rising with a stupid look and a loud yawn, as he pulled the red silk night handkerchief off his fez; "you find me in the midst of my troubles. Mohammed, bring me a wash-hand basin, soap, and towels, and coffee and chibouques. Stir your legs; do you hear?" And in five minutes the Waly had made his toilette and was seated with Osman, smoking a pipe and conversing on state affairs; the Coptic clerk and the servants

having withdrawn to the other end of the apartment.

"What a life I lead!" said the Waly; "I all my days have sighed for place and power, and having now girded on the sword of justice, it drags me to the ground. The common street porter can rest his load on a mustabah from time to time, but the Waly of Cairo knows no rest."

"I never," said Osman Effendi, laughing, "got anything good in my life that was not well paid for. If you go into high places, perspire you must, and with all your pains, you are the best abused man in the Castle of Cairo."

"I have defiled all their mothers!" cried out the Waly, in a violent passion; "what can be said against me?"

"What have been your measures to catch Nasif Bey?" said Osman Effendi.

"Everything that a racked brain can suggest —his own house searched from door to garden, —the street watched,—men at every gate, to observe the passengers day and night. What

more can be done? Why! when you had him in the castle, how did you not keep him there?"

"All true. What news of the son of Sheikh Cassim?" said Osman, briskly changing the conversation.

"None as yet," said the Waly.

"Well! I say it in no unkindness, but his case and several others have caused you to lose ground at the castle; so look sharply to it;—this hint is from me as your friend, to prevent reflections from above."

"And what more can I do?" said the Waly; "if Nasif Bey be in Cairo, he is sure to be taken, but probably he is by this time in the desert, for so shrewd a plotter would never enter into such courses without procuring for himself some retreat in case of failure."

"Well, be on the alert," said Osman; "Sheikh Cassim is outside waiting to see you."

"Well," said the Waly, "we will call him in,"—so, clapping his hands, the servant drew aside the door-curtain, and received orders to usher in Sheikh Cassim, who forthwith entered,

and, after an exchange of salutations, the conversation commenced.

"Sheikh Cassim," said the Waly, "we have been all interested in your case, and, as you well know, up to the present time, no certain intelligence has been received regarding your son. Our shrewdest Bassass has been at your disposal without success. Do not be offended if we must make any delicate inquiries; for the ordinary means of tracing him out have been exhausted, and we must set to work to divine the motives of those who have disappeared with your son. Your case is an extraordinary one, and I have often turned it over in my mind. Let me ask you who are your enemies. Do not reproach me, — I am the surgeon, who must first probe the wound before I attempt the cure."

"Enemies," said Sheikh Cassim. "I feel enmity to no man, except the enemies of God, and I do not know who should be my enemy."

"But, for instance, in your extensive trade and money matters, have you no enemies?"

"I know of none. Opponents I have in the trade of the upper country,—there is Sheikh Saadeddin—but heaven forbid that I should suppose that he would—heaven forbid! he has his faults, and so have I; but to suppose that he could be concerned—impossible," said Cassim.

"Well then," said the Waly, "in political matters, and in what concerns the chief men of the town,—whom do you consider to be your enemies."

"Osman Effendi, there," said Sheikh Cassim, "will tell you that I never meddle actively in politics, or political parties. Mosque, counting-house, and hareem,—there I spend my time; but from politics I am distant. Whoever rules may rule, I will not meddle in their fall; and who is out of place, I will not seek to throw into place."

"And your family?" said the Waly, who observed a slight, and almost imperceptible twinkle of Sheikh Cassim's eye at this word; "have you no brothers or sisters? have you had no question of property, or disputed succession?"

"None," said Sheikh Cassim.

"Was your father of Cairo?" said the Waly, who felt there was something Cassim wished to conceal.

"No," said Sheikh Cassim, "a Syrian; but to tell you the truth, I know very little of my father, or of his relations," added he, with hesitation.

"It is not my business to interfere with the operations of the Waly," said Osman Effendi, "but it seems to me, that in a matter of this sort, nothing should be concealed. It is not a mere robbery, but must have relation to some motive that is not mercenary."

"Every place in the environs has been searched," said the Waly, "and as no trace of the body has been found, he may be still alive, and in hiding."

"God grant it!" said Cassim.

"From what part of Syria did your father come," said the Waly.

"From the mountains of Lattakia," said Cassim.

"Now," said the Waly, "do not be offended

at my question,—was he an orthodox Moslem, or a heretic ? " (Rafady).

" I believe," said Cassim, " a heretic originally but I do not wish this origin generally known ; it is a family secret."

" The hidden is seldom concealed," said Osman, with a smile, as much as to say that this intelligence was not new to him. " We climb the hill of life, with our footing on the infirm points of our neighbours."

" Then God preserve me in the valley," said Cassim.

" Be without apprehension," said the Waly, " my business is to open my ears, and shut my mouth ; to hear and not cackle. Now, perhaps, we are getting nearer the truth. Did you never suspect these people of being concerned in the matter of your son."

" No," said Sheikh Cassim, " for it is more than fifty years since my father died."

" Now I see," said the Waly, " that we are coming on the truth. I know something of these people, and I should not be at all surprised if your son were alive and well, in the

mountains of Syria, learning heterodoxy, and unlearning Islamism."

"I would sooner he were dead."

"Do not be cast down, he will yet be found," said the Waly, bowing to Sheikh Cassim, which the latter understood to be the end of his interview; on which he rose, and, with many thanks, retired.

CHAPTER II.

THE AZHAR.

No sooner had Osman gone, than the Waly, who had fallen into a brown study on the subject of the unpleasant position in which he stood at the castle, suddenly knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and called in a loud voice for Tabia, his Coptic clerk, secretary, and accountant, and imparted to him his uneasiness.

"Who is our best Bassass?" said the Waly.

"Undoubtedly Ali-el-Hakeem," said the Copt; "he has not quite the intelligence of Absalom the Nimble, but he is honest, and his heart is white. Absalom was too long a thief and swindler, to be above taking a feeling from both parties."

"White heart, indeed," said the Waly, with an incredulous grunt; "Ali-el-Hakeem, a quack doctor who poisoned his patients, is no better than Absalom the Nimble. Like the fox after he ate the fowl, he grew honest and penitent when he found that he was going to be hanged. White heart, Mashallah! he is employed in looking after Nasif: so, as I want to get into light about Sheikh Cassim's business, we must set Absalom's intelligence to work. Call him in."

Absalom was now called in, and going up to the Waly, went down on his knees, and remained in this position with his feet crossed over each other; and when the Waly had concluded, he said, "And now, Absalom, exert your intelligence in this affair; you are a shrewd fellow, and when you choose to be on the alert, you can divine the dreams of the devil's great-grandmother, but you lack honesty and zeal. Now, if you are successful, I will get Sheikh Cassim to give you a hundred gold zerrmahboubs, well counted and full weight, and even something better than that.

"Even better than that?" said Absalom, radiant with hope and cupidity.

"Yes, much more and better," said the Waly. "I will give you your ears and your life,—for I swear by the unique God, that if you do not find this boy, dead or alive, within one week, I will cut off your ears, and nail them to each side of the gateway, and hang you by the neck between them."

"God forbid," said Absalom, the dial of his visual barometer suddenly changing from fair to cloudy, for his jaw dropped, and his eyes stood open. "Your highness is pleased to be facetious," said he, with a ghastly smile.

But the Waly, suddenly remembering what Osman Effendi said, about the possibility of his losing his place, dashed his pipe on the ground, and added, "I never joke with you."

"By Allah," said the Bassass, "you shall have the boy dead or alive, and I will not touch a farthing of gold."

"You have the week," said the Waly, relaxing; and when he had concluded the communication of all his suspicions, founded on

Sheikh Cassim's confessions of his having been originally of heterodox parents, the Bassass said, "May God lengthen your days, and shower blessings on you."

So, taking the signal to go, he rose and retired, with his face to the Waly, and thought within himself, "if in six days I have not found the boy, I will not wait the seventh in Cairo." He then went to the next *café*, and having ordered a water-pipe, began to meditate on what was to be done. The explosion of the Waly (a new feature in their intercourse), combined with the visit of Osman Effendi, making Absalom suspect that the Waly himself was in danger.

His first attention was directed to finding out those parties to whom the Waly called his attention; and this was not easy, for there were no public places of worship of those secret and heterodox doctrines, and Absalom the Nimble resolved to seek them where they would be least expected, in the Azhar, or orthodox Moslem University of Cairo. So, mounting his ass, he set forth for this cele-

brated edifice, situated in the upper part of the city, and a little before the hour of Asr, or afternoon prayer, alighted at the Barbers' Gate, the walls all round which are uncommonly rich, with Saracenic tracery, and which gate is so called from the avenue to it being beset by several members of the craft, who, seated on mats surrounded with razors and combs, and mother-of-pearl mirrors and nostril hair-pincers, ply their occupation in the open air. But before we describe what befel the Bassass, it is requisite to say something of this extensive, curious, and celebrated structure.

The Azhar is the great University of Moslem religion and Arab science and literature. The records of the period (for the embalming of which, in his own admirable account of Cairo, Macrizi deserves the thanks of every lover of the curiosities of history) relate that a talisman existed to prevent birds building their nests in the mosque in the form of figures of birds, and the priests and readers were thirty-five in number with special salaries, each receiving a new dress at the Bairam festival; for here the

litany, or *khotbet*, was read in the first years of the Fatimite Caliph, but in Saladin's time we find that it was read in the Mosque of Hakem on account of its greater size. But Sultan Bibars, so well known as a successful warrior of the period of the Crusades, restored the litany to the Azhar, and from that time to this it has retained its preeminence. About the middle of last century it was rebuilt in great part by Abderrahman Kyhia, a Moslem of great wealth and piety, to whom Cairo was indebted for many interesting monuments, so that the present mosque has none of the appearance of the architecture of the age of the Fatimites, which latter was much the same as that of Bagdad in the period of its climax, and the character of which is still distinctly recognizable in Indian, Persian Moslem architecture.

Absalom the Nimble, arrived at the Azhar, sprang off his ass with an agility that corresponded with his name, and looked more like business than devotion, but suddenly checking himself, he composed his looks to a befitting solemnity, and taking off his shoes at the low

bar of entrance, over which he stepped with his bare feet, he entered, carrying his shoes in his hand. He then looked around the scholastic apartments, or cloisters, of the university, which are all on one level; each compartment having for its inmates a distinct and separate character.

The numerously attended Riwack of the Syrians was remarkable for fair complexion and good dresses, while the darkest was that of the Dacroory, built by Sultan Caid Bey, for this people from the upper country, which is distinguished by its scholars, the image of God cut in ebony, of mild, civil manners, and a curious pronunciation of Arabic. At the Riwack of the people of the south-east of Egypt, might be seen the large store of loaves provided for that liberally endowed compartment. East and west seemed to meet in the Azhar, for there, hale, robust and vigorous, with coarse sackcloth haik on his back, might be seen, the haughty, insolent Mograbbin, from beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and in the Riwack of Goa the effeminate, scanty-bearded Moslem of the Indian

Peninsula, who, having made the pilgrimage to Mecca, completed the trip by a visit to this renowned fountain of Arabic grammar, logic, theology, rhetoric, astronomy and astrology, for the Mikaty, or time-calculator of the Mosque of the Azhar was also profound in horoscopes and stellar influences.

When Absalom the Nimble entered the cloisters a loud hubbub was heard, and a strange spectacle presented itself to his view. A blind man, evidently a Christian, had found his way into the mosque, and was seized by a Mograbbin by the turban, while an old sheikh of Cairo gave him a rap with a bamboo cane over the shoulders.

"Did I come from the land of sunset," (Morocco), said the Mograbbin, "to see the Azhar defiled? Out on the Christian! — the impure, the impious."

This was no sooner heard by a group of blind Moslems sitting close by them, than they all started up, brandishing their staves, and cried out, "Where is the Christian! Lead us to him, that we may kill him! Where is he?

Oh, blindness! that hinders us from striking the enemies of God."

"Christian?—Christian?—" said the man who had received the blow, swinging around him a stout bamboo stick with his right hand, while with his left he held hold of the end of the dark blue wrapper of his turban, which had rolled out to some distance, leaving on his head only a cotton skullcap. "I am no Christian, but Sheikh Mohammed-el-Menoufy."

But his voice was drowned in the hubbub, and he was now completely in a circle of shouting fanatics, the group of blind men shaking their staves and crying, "Let not the infidel leave the place alive! let us exterminate him! Woe to the son of sin and perdition!"

Those who had the use of their eyes did not feel inclined to encounter the bamboo cane of the infuriated object of this scuffle, but at length a young religious madman, with a wild exalted look, and dressed only in a brown woollen garment and black leathern girdle, started from the crowd, and was about to seize the reputed Christian, when a sudden and

unexpected blow of the cane struck him on the face. Exasperated, he drew a dagger from his black belt, and was about to strike the owner of the blue turban, when a tall strong man roughly entered the circle, seized his arm, took from him the dagger, and all the bystanders cried out to the blind man to stand back, while the word "*Jindy-el-Mudbach*," the Trooper of the Kitchen, was cried out.

"The Trooper of the Kitchen!" said the reputed Christian, at once lowering his cane, and remaining passive. "Praise be to God for that!" And in a moment the tempest had changed to the most absolute calm, the group of blind men retiring, whispering among themselves, and the others waiting to hear what this new-comer would say.

Ali Halazoum-el-Yenkshery, Trooper of the Kitchen, had a mountain belly and a rocky face, a large wart or mole being visible under his left eye. He was the Constable, or Proctor of the Azhar, for in this mosque or university the civil power was null and void, and the internal regulations of the Azhar and the

police of the students was not interfered with by either the Waly of the city of Cairo or the general government of Egypt. The Shereefs, or nobles, were under their own Nackeeb — a privilege now completely abolished by the system of Mohammed Ali — but all delinquencies in and around the Azhar were taken cognizance of by that functionary, while all minor matters were summarily disposed of by the Trooper of the Kitchen.

"Have you entered the Azhar wilfully, or by blindness?" said the Trooper of the Kitchen, intending to give him an opportunity of leaving the sacred precincts without further ado.

"Wilfully, praise be to God!" said the man, readjusting the blue wrapper of his turban.

"Christian," said the Trooper of the Kitchen, "take care what you say."

"Wilfully—wilfully," said the blind man, stamping with his foot; "I am no Christian, but a believer. I testify that there is no God but God, and that Mohammed is the prophet of God. I am Mohammed-el-Menoufy."

"That he is," said one of the crowd, recognizing him, "I know him well."

"And how do you come to wear the dress of the unbelievers?" said the Trooper of the Kitchen.

"There is no power but in God Almighty—are my shoes black—is my turban blue?"

"Blue—blue," said all the bystanders.

"Not possible," said the blind man: "are you not making jest of me?—oh, shame in the house of God!"

"No jest," said the Trooper of the Kitchen.

On which the blind man took the blue wrapper off his turban, and commenced tearing it to pieces. "May God curse its vendor!" said he.

"How did you come by it?" said the Trooper of the Kitchen.

"A man sold it me as the green one of a Shereef."

A loud roar of laughter rang round the cloisters of the Azhar, in which the young mad man joined, gibbering like an ape, not speaking with sequence, but mumbling to himself, and rolling his eyes.

"So you were going to strike Mohammed-el-Menoufy! for that you deserve fifty strokes on the soles," said the Trooper of the Kitchen, more in jest than earnest, taking hold of his robe as if to apprehend him; but the madman, terror-struck, bolted out in a moment, leaving his woollen blanket in the hands of the Trooper of the Kitchen, and rushing literally naked into the street, he was lost sight of, the shopkeepers staring at him as he swept past under the idea that he was pursued, but the Trooper of the Kitchen returned to his apartment on the termination of the adventure.

Absalom the Nimble, who had been a spectator of the hubbub, and did not wish to obtrude himself in any way on public attention, having other matter in hand, no sooner saw the Trooper of the Kitchen return to his apartment than he followed him thither, for these two worthies had been well known to each other previously, and had had sundry pecuniary transactions in which the trooper had come off second-best. This person, on his return to his room, seated himself in the corner

of the apartment which led from the rice-kitchen, through the door of which was visible the vaulted roof, black soot, and two men cooks, half naked, skimming and surveying the pots on a range of charcoal grates.

The trooper did not invite Absalom the Nimble to be seated, but opened his enormous saucer eyes, and said abruptly, with a half-laugh—

"You notorious villain, are you not yet hanged? what fit of honesty have you taken that has interrupted your career to a noose?—or what fit of dishonesty hath justice taken that you are still at large, and your throat intact?"

"My throat is still in good order," said Absalom the Nimble, coolly, sitting down, "as you will see when I smoke a chibouque and drink a cup of coffee with an old and attached friend."

"Bring coffee here," cried the trooper, through the aperture to the kitchen, with a grin or grimace, which showed anything but appreciation of the friendship: "and when do you intend to pay me that balance?"

"Ah, there again," said Absalom, "you are forgetting the saying of Lokman, or Soliman the Wise—I forget which—'eat and drink with your friend, but do not cast up accounts with him.'"

"Or the other saying," said the trooper, "not of Lokman or Soliman, that 'short accounts make long friends.' What buffalo are you milking just now?"

"I am now in the employ of the Waly," said Absalom.

"Ay, ay—vice, idleness, and swindling cannot get on without the exterior of honesty, while justice cannot attain its ends without employing a pack of rogues — you 'll excuse my candour."

"Nay, I applaud candour," said Absalom with consummate *nonchalance*—"the Trooper of the Kitchen is the organ of justice here; and when he confesses his principles with a sincere and a contrite heart, one must applaud him, and say—long life to the Trooper of the Kitchen!"

"Silence, you thousand-fold ruffian, or I will

make you eat an ardeb of rice at a sitting. Have you dined?" asked the trooper.

"No, indeed—I came to honour the trooper of the Kitchen with my presence, and to drink some of that good Frank wine that he keeps in store."

"You impious villain!—would that you were a baker of loaves short of weight instead of a never-paying debtor, that I might have the pleasure of cropping your ears to the skull-bone," said the trooper.

"Or," said Absalom, "if I gave full weight that you might frighten me into a bribe to save my ears—malice says, that the Trooper of the Kitchen has a handsome revenue in this way."

"Is this jest or earnest?" said the trooper.

"All jest," said Absalom the Nimble, "both what I have said of you and what you have said of me."

"Humph!" said the trooper; "let us pass to business: what is the object of your visit?"

"The Waly has commissioned me," said Absalom, "to look out for a pack of rogues."

"And you come to seek them in the Azhar,

said the trooper; "Mashallah, you are a pretty fellow."

"Yes, in the Azhar," said Absalom; "do not cut my story in slices until you have both head and tail—if there were no rogues in the Azhar what would be the use of the Trooper of the Kitchen. Banter apart, the Waly is in some trouble at the castle, for he threatens to hang me if within a week I do not get some intelligence of the son of Sheikh Cassim, who was carried off a short time ago. This Cassim is of heterodox origin, and there can be little doubt, that the abduction must have some relation to the fanaticism of these people. I wish to get a knowledge of the heretics (Arabice *Arfad*) of Cairo as the likeliest way to get a clue to the perpetrators of the deed."

"Ha!" said the trooper, with a sort of ferocious drollery; "a likely place the Azhar is for Frank wine and heterodox doctrines. Mashallah! Absalom, we are flattered by your opinion of us."

"It is no jesting matter," said Absalom, with earnestness, "if I do not get out of this

business, by G——, the Waly has a great liking to twist my neck. *Ablah Halyk*—may God be merciful to you and help us in the business."

"And if you get your neck out of the noose will you repent of your sins, pay your just debts, and perform other virtuous works," said the trooper.

"This is no jesting matter; help me out of the scrape, and the necessary will be performed."

"Well," said the trooper, "as you have some good qualities, the Waly would act very unjustly to twist your neck for such a matter; I will do all I can to oblige you. I will go out among the Syrian Megawereen (Students), and if, in a quarter of an hour, I have not put you on the scent of these heretics, my name is not Ali Halazoum-el-Yenkshery."

After a short time he returned, and said—"There are two sorts, those that come from the mountains of Syria, and those that come from the country of Irak, and the mountains beyond Mesopotamia. Of the latter, none have frequented the Azhar for the space of three

years; but the principal man of the former is one Abd-el-Aziz, a tobacco-dealer on the Khalidge, near the Cantaret-el-Raham, who once had a shop in the Gamaleey, but has fallen back in the world."

"The Gamaleey," said Absalom the Nimble; "quite enough for the present. Ali Aga, I am obliged to you; we will square accounts if we get out of this business, in the meantime, here is a zerrmahboub on account."

"Keep it," said the trooper, "until you get the boy, and then, if you do not pay me in full, by Allah, we will square accounts in another way."

CHAPTER III.

ABSALOM THE NIMBLE.

Absalom the Nimble lived in the Derb-el-Ferrakha, in the northern part of the city; the massive original wall of Cairo, built by Moezz in the tenth century, and repaired by Saladin, forming one side of his house, the court of which was narrow, and so dark from the impending tower and battlements, that, although the sun is almost always shining in Cairo by day, it looked like the bottom of a well, the lower apartment being so obscure, dilapidated, and uncomfortable, as scarcely to be habitable. He lived mostly on the first floor, but on the second was the *sanctum sanctorum* of astuteness, into which no one penetrated but himself, and the key of which he never entrusted

to his wife. It, in fact, looked like the wardrobe of a theatre, for hung all around were the various dresses and disguises requisite for his profession. On an old chair was the full wound turban of an Alim, or learned doctor; on a peg above, the high conical hat of a dervish; beside it, the tunic of a Circassian, frogged with cartridges; and the coarse wretched haik of the Mograbbin was side by side with the crimson velvet and gold-embroidered jacket of the Albanian; and in a recess usually devoted to the keeping of liquids, were the dye pots that could make the grey head of Absalom the Nimble as black as jet, or as red as brick; and it would have surprised any one to see the difference that such slight changes made, so as to render him unrecognisable except to those very familiar with his features under all disguises.

It was into this chamber that Absalom the Nimble entered on the following morning, having well meditated during the night on what was to be done, and donning the dress of an Effendi, and taking down an ornamented saddle

of blue cloth, which he gave to his servant to put on his mule, he proceeded at the easy pace of a prosperous and well-satisfied gentleman towards the Gamaleey, a bazaar forming the eastern fork of the high street of Cairo, after it divides before the two gorgeous gates of Succour and Victory.

This bazaar is devoted to all the paraphernalia of smoking,—that detestable vice, or agreeable luxury, as the reader may choose to classify it. Here were ranges of Persian zinc water-pipes, curiously enamelled and engraved, and quantities of timback, that weed which, resembling tobacco, has so much more delicate a flavour, that it can be drawn into the lungs so as to produce a pleasing excitement, but if taken in excess it gradually undermines the nervous system ; and all around the shops were festoons of the snake-tubes, through which the air is conveyed. Much of this magnificence has now disappeared from this bazaar, for, instead of the stately pipe of Persia, a cheaper substitute has been found in vases of crystal or glass, a large quantity of which is annually

sent from the woods of Bohemia to all parts of the East, from the shores of the Caspian to the arid deserts of Libya.

Absalom alighted at a shop of this description, and seated himself with a view to purchase, on which the respectable looking shopkeeper, wearing a yellow Bussorah turban, said to him, "A benediction, my master!" while he handed him the snake mouth-piece he was smoking, with the point turned back, according to custom.

"Here, youngster,—bring coffee, and without delay. What is your pleasure, my master?"

"I wish," said Absalom, "to buy a small quantity of tobacco, and also of timback."

"You shall be served to your content," said the man; "I have the timback here, and tobacco in the magazine;" so going into the dark room behind, he brought out some of the timback, which he recommended with a glowing eulogy; and then taking Absalom a little way along the bazaar, and turning into a high dark gateway, they found themselves in a khan, in which was tobacco enough to turn the cloud-

less winter of Cairo into the murky atmosphere of London, and the Bassass, after a great deal of familiar conversation, fixed upon some Tyrian and some Lattakia tobacco, which go by the familiar names of Sury and Gebely; but tobacco was not the sole object of the visit of Absalom, who by the time the matter was concluded, the coffee drunk, and the pipe smoked, was full of pleasant plausibility, deep in discussion of the merits of the various other tobacco dealers.

"Then what quantity do you take?" said the merchant.

"Half an oke of Sury, half an oke of Gibely, and an oke of timback," said Absalom.

"Good!" said the merchant; "there it is."

"The weight is of course correct?" said Absalom.

"Quite correct," said the man, in surprise.

"I know it is," said Absalom. "There is a roguish neighbour of yours who does not treat his customers so well, for he gives short weight."

"Who is that?" said the merchant.

"A scoundrel, of the name of Abderrahman Kerim, who was obliged to leave Bagdad for a murder," said Absalom.

"Did you ever get short weight from him?" said the tobacco merchant, with a slight wink of his eye, and scarcely able to restrain an expression of anger.

"Not I," said Absalom; "but I have heard a great deal of the character of that scoundrel from an honest man of the name of Abd-el-Aziz."

"What else did you hear from him of this Abderrahman?" said the tobacco dealer.

"That he adulterated his tobacco by washing it in the juice of the noxious plant called *sigaweey*."

The merchant started, and on Absalom laying down the money, he flatly refused to take it.

"I," said the shopkeeper, trembling with anger, "am the Bagdad merchant Abderrahman Kerim. There is my tobacco; prove it; try it in weight and quality, and not a *fuddah* will I receive until you are satisfied, and then say

whether I am a poisoner or your informant a liar."

"Strange and singular," said Absalom, with an air of simplicity; "my informant spoke of the matter with such pertinaciousness that I could not doubt it. If the statement should prove to be incorrect, and the tobacco good, and of good weight, I and all my friends will for the future deal with you, and I will be on my guard for the future against this man, if he prove to be a calumniator; for if he be a dishonest man, it is in my power to do him much harm."

"This man," said the merchant, with eagerness, "has given you a false character of me. Are you curious to hear a true character of him?"

"Do not imitate him," said Absalom, "by making him worse than he is. I am a man of impartiality and justice. Tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"By Allah! my master, I always thought him a most suspicious character at the least,"

said the merchant. "And now I know him to be a scoundrel of the most refined alchemy. He had at one time a large business in the importation of Lattakia tobacco, but his money disappeared, nobody knew how. He must be a heretic," continued the merchant, lowering his voice, "and engaged in a confederacy, for when he made losses that would have ruined another man, he found friends to help him; and it was observed, that the others, suspected of being confederates, were bare of cash in consequence; and if others that he associated with lost money, he was soon observed to be bare of cash."

"And what is the nature of this confederacy?" said Absalom.

"Am I acquainted with the arts of the devil?" said the tobacco merchant.—"Confederacy there must be, for at sales his associates are seen to converse with each other by their fingers, and by signs agreed on."

"But if he be a Rafady (heretic), why is he not discovered?" said Absalom.

"Because he and they have all the externals

of Islamism, and are secret allies. I once heard from the old Shah Bandar, of Lattakia, that this man's great bosom friend was the father of Sheikh Cassim ebn Daoud, who and whose family are good Moslems, whatever the malicious may say to the contrary. But he died many years ago;—these people were in a sort of partnership with him, but ever since his death, and his capital being no longer accessible to them, they have been poor."

"Is Abd-el-Aziz a man of ability?" said Absalom.

"*Afreet*," said the tobacco merchant, "a very devil, but malicious and taciturn—tolerably honest in money matters, but vindictive and not to be foiled in his point."

"And you say the father of Cassim had relations with these people?"

"Certainly," said the tobacco dealer.

"And has Sheikh Cassim kept up these relations?"

"No; he scarcely knows these people: his father died when he was young. But there is some spite or envy, for Abd-el-Aziz has been

observed to mutter to himself when the name of Cassim is mentioned."

"Are you aware that his son has been carried off?" said Absalom.

"All Cairo knows it."

"Is it not a strange business?" said Absalom.

"Very strange, indeed.

"Who can have done it?" said Absalom. "Could a boy of that age make enemies?"

"No indeed; I have all along had strange suspicions as to the real authors of this business."

"And why do you not enlighten justice?" said the Bassass.

"Because," said the tobacco merchant, with a grim smile, "the man that I suspect capable of carrying off a child, is capable of getting me murdered, or at least might get me bastinadoed for slander; and at the best I should get no thanks from justice."

"Where does Abd-el-Aziz live?" said Absalom.

"At the Cantarat-el-Raham, on the Kha-

ledge," said the merchant, in some surprise.—"I thought you knew him."

"I met him at a café," said the Bassass, with indifference.

From this moment the rejoinders of the merchant grew monosyllabic, and symptomatic of a polite impatience to end the conversation: on seeing which the Bassass took his leave.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF THE DEAD.

In other capitals the whirlpool of human movement subsides by suggestive gradations from the city centres to the comparative calm of the suburbs, the stillness of the country, and the loneliness of the wastes. Around the greater part of Cairo the transition, from the first to the last, is immediate. Pass the gates of Succour or Victory but a short way, and the fresh breeze, the blue sky, and the noontide sun, shining brightly and broadly on the yellow sands, almost remind the wayfarer of the loneliness of the shores of the ocean. A cluster of edifices at the foot of the hills, looking like a suburban village, with several domes and minarets, seem to do away with the idea of the

sudden transition from the bustle of the town to solitude; but this is the city of the dead and not of the living—the sepulchres of the Mameluke Sultans, surpassing in beauty of outline and elaboration of detail, the dwellings of living kings; and mingled with these palatial sepulchres, are some houses that were once the homes of the living, not prostrate like the relics of a departed race, but all their shells entire as if awaiting living tenants.

"I think I may call myself safe now," said Nasif Bey, as he approached a deserted tomb.—"My escape has been a narrow one, and I do not know whether I am under greater obligations to you or to the Frank girl, who provided me with so secure and convenient an asylum. I would not for a pashalic go through the same ordeal; and it is odd that the man who never quailed under a shower of bullets, should have been in such a state of alarm and disquiet at every turn of the street, and at the approach of a guard. But one word more,—do not think me insatiable, or unpolite, for asking you the same questions a second time:

‘ What do the people really say of me and my hareem ? ’ ”

“ Why,” said Khaled, “ as I told you, some say you have escaped in a boat on the Nile to Rosetta, where you have taken ship to Stamboul in disguise ; others, that you have crossed the desert in the garb of a Bedouin ; and some say that you must still be hiding in some house in Cairo : and as for your wife, all Cairo is in admiration of her devotion.”

“ El Hamdu-lillah,” said Nasif : — “ Well, what is the next move ?”

“ Why,” said Khaled, “ we will enter that tomb, and remain in a stow hole until the camels pick you up, and I will be on the outlook for their arrival.”

On this they entered the tomb, and going through a chilly, sunless passage, with displaced flags and disjointed mortar, found themselves in a quadrangle that looked like that of a mosque. A withered palm attested that there had existed at no distant date a well, or fountain, and two slender minarets, ornate with all the devices of the fifteenth century, stood in the apposition of

character and locality to a chamber surmounted by a dome crown; which, wide arching within, and boldly fretted without, covered the tomb of one of the Borgite Sultans.

"What a diversity of conditions of men!" said Nasif, in a state of profound melancholy; "here am I an outcast, escaping narrowly from the fangs of justice; unknown as good or great—and if known, hated or despised,—while the name of those illustrious Sultans will live for ever. Oh Allah! am I the living in the city of the dead?—No, verily; the outcast that sees the monuments of the illustrious is the dead in the city of the living. But what have we here?—an inscription," and he got Khaled to read aloud the following lines; which, by the will of the monarch himself, Malek-el-Nadir-Seif-eddin-Sunkor, had been inscribed on the tomb after an experience of regal power as fleeting and precarious as that of the Mameluke Sultans was, all of them, uncertain how soon a plot or midnight murder might procure them a gorgeous sepulchre:—

How oft have I fought, and how oft have I slain,
And how oft have I drained the enlivening bowl!
How oft hath the dulcimer's ravishing strain
When attuned by fair fingers, enraptured my soul!

How often the first on the tottering scale
Have I mounted the rampart's precipitous height!
How oft did the sturdiest barriers fail
To avert from the maiden a captiveless fate!

How the dome-crowned pavilions, devoted to mirth,
Re-echoed the wail of the terror-struck throng!
How the tombs of the kings, and the mansions of death,
Resounded with wassail and revelry's song!

How gaily the cup of existence I quaffed—
But oh, how deceitfully sparkled its foam!
How delicious to taste, but how bitter a draught!—
The portals of pleasure but lead to a tomb.

"Well," said Nasif, "this has an air of truth, and I feel less unhappy than I was."

"What noise is that?" said Khaled, as he led him into the recess behind the manbar or pulpit through a dilapidated part of the wall.

Nasif listened and said, "It is distant cannon; let us go out again to some opening"—boom—m—m—m—"there again," added Nasif, "that is the roar of artillery, forty or fifty hours off, and carried by the north-west wind over the level Delta—can it be war in Egypt?"

"I think," said Khaled, "whatever it be, that it will be better if you wait in the hiding-place until I let you know when the camels come up."

"You are right," said Nasif, and forthwith they returned to the cell behind the manbar, when distant cannon again lowly booming across the plain was faintly audible among the vaulted echoes of the tomb.

"I am in a torture of every sort of impatience and anxiety," said Nasif, "so pray give me immediate hint of the approach of the camels."

In the afternoon Khaled re-entered the inner tomb, and said to Nasif,

"A boy has come from the camel-man, saying that the town is full of confusion, that his camels have been seized for the government service, and that all the prisoners are set at liberty."

"What can this mean?" said Nasif Bey; "where is the boy?"

"The boy has returned to Cairo."

"The whole is a mystery."

Voices were now heard outside, and Khaled was alarmed; but the current of conversation

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which passed between two persons meeting each other showed that there was nothing to apprehend if they remained perfectly still.

"And where have you been, Abou Ali?" said a clear voice.

"I have been to the town to buy rice, dried dates, and other provisions," answered a wheezing, gurgling voice. "The heat this day has been accursed. I got on well as far as the Bab-el-Fotouh, but this stretch across the sand takes away my wind and kills me."

"Does you good, Abou Ali, and keeps down your fat: without it you would become as unwieldy as a buffalo; but why bring so much at once, you have only yourself and your wife in that old tomb. One would think that you were Aga of a tower, and laying in a store of provisions to hold out against an enemy. Ho! Abou Ali, you call yourself poor, and obliged to live in a tomb to save house-rent in Cairo. No, no, Abou Ali, you are well off, and intend to keep the festivals gaily. Well, I wish you much merriment, Abou Ali."

"Festivals indeed—have you not heard the news?"

"No. What news?"

"Great news—immense news!"

"Perhaps Nasif Bey has been caught?"

"*Ghusheem*, you dunderhead, what signifies it whether he be caught or not? One Bey is as like another as one vulture is like another."

Here Khaled gave the Bey an arch look, somewhat inconsistent with the habitual gravity of his demeanour, which the Bey answered by a somewhat sour and averted visage.

"Guess again," said the gurgling, breathless voice.

"Now you are coming nearer the mark, and your sagacity begins to dawn," and the loud thwack of a broad and heavy hand on the shoulder of the other accompanied the appreciation of the acuteness of his interlocutor. "Not only," said he "is tobacco risen in price, but every article in the bazaar, and this day twelvemonths things will be yet dearer. Mark my words, this is the month of Moharram, 1213, this day twelve months we may scarce have bread to eat."

"There is no power but in God Almighty—

what does that mean? Are you mad, Abou Ali?"

"Not a bit. Last Wednesday five-and-twenty English ships of war, great, middling, and small, anchored off Alexandria, and a boat with ten men came on shore, wishing to speak to the Ayan of the town. So they took them to Said Mohammed-el-Kerim, at the Custom-house, and said, we are English, and no doubt the French, who have fitted out a great expedition, are destined for the land of Egypt: you are unable to resist them, and we come to offer you our assistance. But Said Mohammed Kerim, suspecting a trick, said, this land belongs to the Sultan, and the French cannot come here; but everybody believed the French were coming, and the Kashef of Baira had orders to guard the coast, and there is a rumour that the French have landed near Alexandria."

"Oh, ho! Abou Ali, that is dreadful news. God be with you!"

When this conversation was finished the men parted company to the great relief of Nasif Bey, and Khaled said,

"If the Franks conquer Egypt, the power of Morad Bey will be broken, and your sentence of death will be a nullity."

"The Franks in the Castle of Cairo," said Nasif, angrily, "and my hareem in their power! I would sooner lose my head fifty times over, than that the Castle of Cairo, or the land of Egypt should be in the hands of the Giaour," and, in a rage, he dashed against the manbar a silver pocket water-cup, which he held in his hand. "No, since it has come to this, my mind is made up, and I will offer myself again to Morad Bey, and he may dispose of me as he chooses, but I ask for nothing better than to die fighting against the accursed infidels. Pray go into the town and bring me some provisions and intelligence. I will sleep here to-night, on the softest flag I can find, and to-morrow must get you to have a letter written to Ibrahim Bey, and presented through the Emir Mergoush, his son."

"Well," said Khaled, "at all events, you must be hungry, and cannot do without provisions."

Khaled now returned to Cairo to purchase provisions, and then went into a café to rest himself previous to his long walk. The sunlight entered at a back window, through a curiously turned wooden trellis-work, which blinded his eyes as he entered, and seemed to form on the earthen floor a carpet of dusky diagonal streaks, and having called for coffee, saw that a couple of tradesmen of the quarter, on the broad seat, talking loudly with each other.

"If I had my will of it," said one man, "not one Christian should be allowed to reside in Egypt, and instead of apprehending all the French subjects and taking them to the castle, I would chop off their heads."

"What has happened," said Khaled, "to the French subjects?"

"Every soul of them carried up to the castle, except a few who have escaped and are in hiding."

Khaled at once recollected that Moro, in some way, was under French protection, and this again threw him into anxiety and uncertainty on the subject of Melusina, and, as he

learned in the course of further conversation, that Abd-el-Aziz and Salih had been apprehended, on a charge of making away with Sheikh Cassim's son—he was full of trouble and anxiety as he returned in the gloaming to the hiding place of Nasif Bey.

CHAPTER V.

KASR-EL-AIN.

We are now arrived at the most stirring portion of our adventures; but a few historical observations are, first of all, necessary for our purpose.

Six centuries after the chivalric St. Louis and his Paladins carried the banners of the Cross into the land of the Crescent, the guillotine basket yawned for the head of his descendant, Louis the Sixteenth; and the brother of this unhappy prince sought an asylum in the land of the lion-hearted Richard, now glorious and prosperous under the august and venerable house of Guelf; and soon, thereafter, the wonderful soldier of fortune, who, even then, all but sat on the throne of the Capets, not content with

the possession of Italy and Germany, received from the Knights of St. John the surrender of Malta, and no sooner landed in the city of St. Mark and St. Athanasius, than he recommended himself to the people of Egypt as an enthusiastic admirer of the Prophet and his Koran. Such are the strange tricks that Time can play, with the most cherished modes of looking at things human and divine.

The noble fleet that carried the French invaders, destined so soon to succumb to the thunders of Nelson, was richly freighted, as well with those cunning in the arts of peace, as with those skilled in the arts of war. The Commander-in-Chief being, in however unequal proportion, the incarnation of both, and to whom the great work, commonly called the French Description of Egypt, would be a passport of eternal glory, if the powers of analysis and constructiveness displayed in that book did not bear to the destructiveness of the whole expedition, somewhat the same proportion as Falstaff's half-penny worth of bread to his fiery oceans of health and wealth-consuming sack.

"We can observe Nature, but we cannot vanquish her," was the sound reflection that Bonaparte made on the summers of Egypt, and it proved the moral of his subsequent career. Omnipotent in central Continental Europe, the torrid plains of Egypt, the frosts of Russia, and the sierras of Spain, where a small army is beaten, and a large one dies of hunger, were all territories lying on the wrong side of the line of possibility, and furnish matter for profound and acute observation to the historian who hath lived after the fact, and who, *ex cathedrâ*, inculcates the maxim, *In medias tutissimus ibis*, to all principalities and powers, the limits of the *medias*, as applied to particular cases, being left to their own discretion, subject to the indulgent and reasonable strictures of the historian after the fact.

It was not only among the orthodox Moslems that the French invasion had created alarm, for they were encased in a confidence that in the sequel proved fallacious, not only from a belief in the support of the God of battles, but in that providence of carnal poli-

ticians which is usually on the side of the strongest battalions. All the traditions of Egypt preserved in the admirable chronological works of Macrizi and others, led to the belief in the superior valour and conduct of the Moslems; and the deeds of Saladin and Bibars, sung in a hundred songs, and recounted in a hundred authentic narrations, as well as recited in tales of fiction, maintained the delusion. Nor is this surprising. The Porte had quite recently been a formidable reality that had baffled the united resources of Joseph and Catharine; and in our own islands, appalled by the colossal apparition of the military genius of Napoleon during the Italian campaign, it was hoped, and half trusted, that in a level country like Egypt, and in a hot and inhospitable climate, his legions might come off second best in an encounter with the far-famed Mameluke cavalry of Egypt. The Moslems were rather indignant than otherwise; but the poor Coptic Rayahs were terror struck, and apprehended massacres and confiscations, in consequence of a Christian invasion of Egypt.

In vain did their chiefs tell the Beys, that the French, by abolishing Christianity, had ceased to be their co-religionists in ever so remote a degree. The common people would not understand or acknowledge this disclaimer, and the Coptic quarter was daily menaced and terrorized by insults.

However defective the Mamelukes may have been in skill in the modern art of war, a want of alacrity and activity to give a hot reception to the French invaders cannot be reproached them. Morad Bey was at Djize exercising the young aspirants, when news arrived of the landing of the French at Alexandria; and Ibrahim Bey, who was at Cairo, no sooner received this intelligence, than he communicated it to his partner in the government, and at the same time summoned to a conference at his villa of Kasr-el-Ain, all the principal Beys, Ulema and Ayan, then in Cairo.

Kasr-el-Ain has a pleasant situation on the banks of the Nile, opposite the island of Rodah, and having ample supplies of water, is not only surrounded with trees, that form a refreshing

contrast to the dry yellow desert land to the south, but, looking across the water to the wooded island at a part a little north of the Nilometer, the distant peaks of the pyramids, as viewed from the upper windows, seemed to rise out of the woods to the westward, while the intervening Nile, in the month of July, was gradually, as the inundation increased, filling up the space from bank to bank.

All the great men of Cairo were present, as well Beys as Ulema; but the recital of their names would be tedious, the principal personage being Morad Bey, with his large Dean Swift looking nostrils, a slight squint in his eyes, and his turban drawn far down his brow. Bekir Pasha, the representative of the Porte, who, being now convalescent, had returned from his Nile voyage, was impatiently expected; and Morad Bey often looked at his watch, and was inclined to proceed without him, but his fretfulness was appeased by the more politic Ibrahim Bey. Eyoub Bey, the old Sybarite, was extremely troubled at the idea of his domestic existence being interrupted by foreign

war, but his conscience acquitted him of having neglected any opportunity of multiplying the numbers of the adherents to the banners of Islamism. Along with him, at the head of the room, with their backs to the light, sat the other great Beys and Ulema; and at the foot, the merchants and officers of Janissaries, and civil functionaries connected with the revenue and commissariat departments.

A noise was at length heard in the court-yard, and Bekir Pasha being announced, all rose to receive him. Morad Bey's countenance betrayed his coolness and dislike; but Ibrahim Bey, like the great man who ascended to Tyburn half a century before, showed that the heart was the proper seat of hatred, and the countenance of respect and esteem. Pipes of tobacco were served, and this Cairo parliament began in smoke, that very atmosphere in which modern democratic parliaments usually terminate.

Osman Effendi then read the dispatch of the collector of customs and governor of Alexandria, Said Mohammed-el-Kerim, announcing the arrival of the French fleet, concluding with

the words—" In short, the fleet that has appeared is immense, so that we can neither see where it begins nor where it ends, for the love of God, and his prophets, and us combatants." A slight buzz of conversation followed the reading of this dispatch, which Osman Effendi handed to Bekir Pasha, for his farther examination and perusal.

" You hear, Effendeler," said the Pasha, " the evil news that has come. Before I take any resolution, I wish first of all to hear the opinion of the notables on the crisis ; " and returning the despatch to Osman Effendi, he resumed his pipe and looked round the divan.

Morad Bey looked sourly to the Pasha, and said,

" The Sublime Porte has of late been under so many evil influences, and has been counselled into courses of so perverse a nature, that this event does not surprise me. I cannot suppose or imagine that any Frank power would dare to attempt a landing and conquest of Egypt, without some connivance with the Sublime Porte. The proofs of the hostility of

the Porte have been so violent and so recent, that I do not know how far it is proper to have Bekir Pasha a partaker of our counsels, and God will aid us against you and against them."

"This is language," said Bekir Pasha, briskly, "that no Moslem ought to hold. Differences have existed between Constantinople and Cairo, but remember that the Sultan is Sultan of Egypt. His Viziers may differ, but shall the Divan of the Caliph betray the land conquered by Sultan Selim? Never. When the English and French disembarked in India, had the Sultan any thing to do with it? No. If the hour of difficulty has arrived, let every one arise, draw the sword, and meet the death of brave men. Osman Effendi, go on with the reading of the dispatches."

After the perusal of the subsequent dispatches, which described the well-known capture of Alexandria by Napoleon's force, Osman Effendi then read a document of much greater interest — the Proclamation of General Bonaparte, in the Arabic language, in which he professes Islamism.

" In the name of the merciful and indulgent God, there is no God but God; he has no Son and reigns without a partner. On the part of the French Republic, established upon principles of liberty, and on the part of the Commander-in-Chief, the Great Bonaparte, We let all the inhabitants of Egypt know, that the Beys, who for a long time back have governed this country, overwhelm the French nation with contempt, and inflict upon their merchants every injustice; but the hour of their chastisement is come. This troop of Caucasian and Georgian Mamelukes, tyrannizes the best part of the globe; but the law of the world, He whose power extends everywhere, has ordered the end of their empire.

" Egyptians! they will tell you that I have come here intending to destroy your religion; do not believe such a falsehood;—tell the impostors that I come to restore to you your rights—that I worship God more than the Mamelukes, and that I respect the prophet Mahomed and the noble Koran;—tell them that all men are equal before God, and that intelligence,

virtue, and science, alone distinguish them. But wherever there is fertile land, it belongs to the Mamelukes; fine clothes, slaves, agreeable houses, are all theirs. If Egypt is their farm, let them show the lease which God has given them. Formerly there were in Egypt, large towns, canals, and a considerable trade; but by the avarice and tyranny of the Mamelukes, they have ceased to exist.

"Oh! you Cadis, Sheikhs, Immams, and dignitaries, tell the people that the French are true Moslems, in proof of which they went to Rome and destroyed the throne of the Pope, who always excited the Christians to make war on the Moslems; that they drove away from Malta the cavaliers who imagined that God expected them to fight against Islamism; and, besides that, they have been in all times the particular friends of his highness the Sultan of the Ottomans (may God prolong his kingdom!), and the enemies of his enemies;—the Mamelukes, on the contrary, have never obeyed him or followed any instinct but those of their caprices.

"Happy those who join us, for they will be promoted. Happy those, too, who remain neutral; for when they know us better their hearts will turn to us; but woe to those who join the Mamelukes, for even the traces of them will disappear from the earth."

"An impious imposture!" said Sheikh Mohammed Juhery, then one of the first of the Ulema, and father, if I mistake not, of the very learned Sheikh-el-Juhery, now living.—"Do we not know from time immemorial what are the French? Do those who live in Egypt go to worship in our mosques? Has the religion of Islam penetrated into France? We hear, indeed, that they have demolished their own religion; but if they are bad Christians, that does not make them good Moslems. Better and fitter would it have been if they had preserved silence and come with the drawn sword, rather than with a lie in their mouths. Surely no one, not even the lowest of our Fellaheen, can be deceived by such an odious imposture."

"No one," said all.

"I cannot believe," said Sheikh Abdallah

Sharkawy, "that the government of the Sublime Porte would say anything against the faith of Islam; it is rather the presumption of the Franks, who have been seduced by the prospect of possessing the rich land of Egypt."

"These French infidels," said Sheikh Araby, "have for their allies not only the French in Egypt, from the Consul downwards, but all the Christians. Let us make a great example and strike terror into the world, by destroying them root and branch. Those who bow down to the cross and would impose a partnership of divinity on the Most High God, led all their heads fall, Frank, Coptic, and Syrian."

"No," said Sheikh Cassim, who occupied a seat on the left, between Said Omar and Halil-el-Bekri, "that would be the grossest injustice;—these men are Rayahs of the Sultan: let us adhere to the laws of Islamism. If the hair of the head of one who has paid the tax of deliverance (Haradge, literally, exit or going out), we commit an injustice. Let us remember, the glorious antecedents of Egypt. A Bibars and a Saladin would have despised an act

of oppression—the Sultan is the possessor of glory and grandeur. Does the lion war with the worm? No," continued he, "unless the Pasha protect the Rayahs, he will expose himself to reproach."

Ibrahim Bey then said, "We must avoid injustice to the Rayahs, but secure the enemies of Egypt—all the subjects of France, without any exception, must be secured."

"That is only just and reasonable," said Morad Bey; "every one, without exception, must be apprehended."

"Let that business be settled on the instant," said Ibrahim Bey to the Waly. "Let the interpreter and the Cavass Bashi, with a sufficient force, assure himself of the persons of every French subject. Now, what means are to be taken to repel the invasion?"

"I, for my part," said the Pasha, "will immediately send a courier to the Porte, giving information of all circumstances, and for this I shall require the fleetest dromedary, to cross the desert."

"Very good," said Morad Bey, "still rank-

ling with the enmity, which his relations with the Porte had engendered, and, with a coarse laugh, he repeated the proverb, — "A man bitten by a serpent sends for balm from Babylon,"—(literally, the ointment Theriak, from the country of Irak), he has time to die in the meanwhile. "Beys," continued he, "we must look to ourselves. We will crush the hats of those insolent Franks under the hoofs of our steeds; but, on the coast we are weak. Alexandria has been taken, we must therefore provide a chain of at least fifty fathoms in length, to prevent the smaller craft from passing into the Nile. With a floating battery behind this chain, and batteries on each side, we shall effectually prevent those insolent Cafirs from advancing."

"A Seraskier is requisite—a leader," said Ibrahim Bey, "must be named, having absolute and uncontrolled power over the military resources, until Egypt be freed from this scourge. Morad Bey, by his antecedents, has the confidence of all the Mameluke Beys, and is, in

my humble opinion, the person fitted for this great trust."

"As far as the Porte is concerned, and the divan of which I am the representative," said the Pasha, "he also enjoys the fullest confidence. The offensive expressions he has used with reference to the divan will not prevent me from giving full support to measures requisite for the common good."

"And all the Ulema," said Sheikh Abdallah-el-Sharkawy, "have equal confidence in Morad Bey."

"Morad Bey," said all, with enthusiastic acclamations, "is the man to defend the cause of Islamism."

"I hope," said Morad Bey, "to correspond with your confidence. I fight not for my own ambition, but in defence of Islamism. If I am successful, it will be through the co-operation of the Beys, the Emirs, the Kashefs, the Tchorbagis and the Janissaries. I fix my head-quarters at Ghizeh for the present, and expect a large rendezvous."

"Not a Mameluke of mine shall remain behind," said Mohammed Bey-el-Elfi.

"And I," said Osman Bey-el-Bardissy, "am resolved to leave my body on the spot rather than yield."

"And we," said Mohammed-es-Sadat, "if not men of war, must see that the wants of our combatants are supplied. I, for my part, will share my last ragheef of bread with the last soldier who fights for Islamism."

The divan then broke up, and most of those who composed it left Kasr-el-Ain for Cairo, amid a great hubbub of horses and servants, with hasty and passionate exclamations and oaths, so different from the usual tranquillity and politeness of oriental congregations; and when they were gone, the two Beys descended to the garden, for further consultation, the Nile flowing at their feet, and the island of Rodah on the other side, on the bank of which was seen an Arnaout in his white petticoat, sitting under the shade of a sycamore, all the servants and attendants keeping at a distance, the only persons accompanying them being Osman

Effendi, the confidential secretary, Ali Pasha-el-Djerram, who had just been expelled from Algiers, and Nasif Pasha, who had been exiled by the Porte, and had received an asylum in Egypt with Morad Bey. The former of them was a good soldier, and Morad Bey said, at the conclusion of the consultation,—"Ali Pasha, we are fortunate in possessing you, and to you I give the defence of the left bank of the Nile, and the charge of the ammunition and provisions for the troops."

No sooner were they gone than the Emir Mergoush, a fine young man, the son of Ibrahim Bey, approached somewhat timidly, and said, "Here is a suppliant with a letter."

"From Nasif Bey," said Ibrahim, colouring with rage as he took the epistle.—

"My dear boy, how could you have accepted such a commission as the delivery of this letter?—this is the way in which such people seek to impose on us through our domestic affections."

"Father," said the Emir Mergoush, "the Alim, under whose guidance you put me, has

taught me to prize clemency and generosity as among the first of virtues."

Ibrahim Bey made no answer, but hastily opened the letter, which ran as follows:—

"(After compliments.)—In ordinary times clemency is laudable, and reconciliation with our enemies is praiseworthy; but in extraordinary times, when the foes of Islam seek to possess themselves of lives and of lands, devoted to the true faith, conciliation must be doubly acceptable to the Most High. The poor Nasif Bey, hearing of the dangers that beset Morad and Ibrahim, and Islamism, has been beset with anxiety, dissatisfaction, and grief, and now comes to implore of them forgetfulness of the past, so far as to allow him to die in battle, fighting against the enemies of Islam. The enemies of Ibrahim Bey and Morad Bey have landed in Egypt; and it would have been easy for the poor Nasif, from his secure retreat, his unknown hole and invisible asylum, to have saved himself and fled; but death combating in the ranks of Islamism, is better than dishonour. The poor Nasif now kisses the ground

before your feet, and awaits your orders to combat the enemies of Morad Bey and of yourself."

(Signed)

"THE POOR NASIF, *Alti-Parmak*."

literally, six fingers, an adjunct to his name, from possessing that number of digits on his left hand.

"What is to be done with this scoundrel?" said Ibrahim Bey to Morad Bey, handing the letter to Osman Effendi to read to Morad Bey, who was not very literary.

"Is he taken?" said Morad.

"No," said the Emir Mergoush; "he surrenders himself at discretion; and see, there he comes," added he, pointing to the Nile, where the man, in the Arnaout dress, was crossing in a skiff, with a single boatman.

"Why," said Morad, "I confess that the events of the last few days have made me forget all about Nasif Bey. What think you yourself about him?—what say you to accepting his services?"

"I confess that I think that he might forget

our magnanimity, and prove at some future time dangerous," said the more cautious Ibrahim Bey.

"Ah!" said Morad, smiling, "he thought you not so ill disposed to him as myself, and, therefore, he wrote to you. Now," said the somewhat more chivalric Morad, "if our ascendency enraged him, and defeated his ambitious views, our clemency, if unattended with humiliation, may bind him. As for future dangers from him, let us first meet the danger of the day."

"Take your own way," said Ibrahim; "you are now Seraskier."

On this Nasif Bey entered, and Morad Bey forthwith began as follows:—

"Not a single word, Nasif Bey, on the past, which may be left undiscussed, but cannot be cancelled. There is but one business now in hand. The enemies of Islam are at our gates —go to the town, assemble whom you can of your old Mamelukes, and come to my rendezvous at Ghizeh. You are pardoned in consideration of the interests of Islamism. You will

find your wife safe and sound in the custody of the cadi, her legal guardian, and the Ruznamgi will have orders to take the detainer off your lands and revenues."

"You overwhelm me," said Nasif, — "I know not what to answer. You will yet hear of Nasif."

"Your courage is well known," said Morad Bey; "another week will settle accounts between us and the Franks; and should you distinguish yourself, you shall have permission to take yourself out of Egypt, with goods and chattels. The Emir Mergoush will accompany you to the house of the Waly, and signify your liberation from pursuit; and, as time presses, let me see you soon at the rendezvous at Ghizeh."

So saying, Nasif Bey, accompanied by the Emir Mergoush, mounted horse and proceeded to Cairo, while Morad Bey embarked on the Nile for his villa and head-quarters.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEIT-EL-CADI.

On the second morning after the escape of Nasif Bey, his wife Fatimeh, still in custody, but again supplied with a female wardrobe, sat silent and motionless on the divan which had served as a bed to her husband. Opposite her stood the wife of the jailer, her eyelids red with weeping, and her eye-balls scowling in the deepest anger on the Bey's wife, who, worn out with anxiety, was pale as alabaster, and had her eyes fixed on the ground.

"It is you, you scorpion, who have brought all this trouble on us," said the jaileress. "For you my husband has been drubbed within an inch of his life, and lies prostrate as a mummy. Your husband was a traitor and deserved his

doom. Why did you bring us into trouble? Do you not deserve that I should requite you with the weight of my pattens, till the last drop of blood is squeezed out of you, or until you tell me where your husband is hiding?"

Fatimeh heard all this in silence, and then shed tears, saying, "Then he is not taken after all."

"You slut—you scorpion," said the jailer's wife, "but you are in the trap yourself," and was about to handle Fatimeh somewhat rudely, when her arm was arrested by a stranger, and a voice was heard to say,—

"Softly, good woman. This is Nasif Bey's wife, I imagine—she is no longer in your custody, but in mine—she goes with me to the Waly—and as for your husband he will get well again, so dry up your tears, comfort your heart, and let this lady alone. One cannot be hard on a woman that risks her own neck to save her husband's!"

The first feeling of Fatimeh was that of an effusion of gratitude, but a thrill of horror went through her, as she found that the new de-

liverer was Selim Aga, who had been the cause of her father's death. But the habitual veil worn by females, and the circumstance of her having been a girl at that time, prevented any corresponding recognition on the part of Selim Aga, and the hasty view of her person had predisposed him to other feelings than those of a harsh legal officer. The dress of the fair Bosniac, that had been sent her from her wardrobe of Birket-el-Fyl, was more fitted for a gala occasion than for the melancholy position of pawn for a traitor condemned to death; and knowing that, if he chose, he could give her news of her husband, and impelled by the one absorbing passion, she threw herself at his feet, and implored him to say a single word, which might put an end to her uncertainty as to Nasif's fate.

A dress of blue satin, fitting close to the shoulders, covered her tall but finely proportioned form; a deep crimson Cashmere shawl encircled her waist. Glossy shining white silk stockings covered her small feet half inserted in the slippers, and black glossy hair in graceful

plaits hung down her back, while her well developed bust heaved with emotion. From that moment the venom of an unholy passion circulated in the veins of Selim Aga, and raising her up, he replaced her on the divan, and smoothing his rugged voice and features into a hideous caricature of blandishment, said,—

"You must be well aware that a stringent duty shuts my lips on all that concerns Nasif Bey, and that however willing I may be to give you information, you know that it is against all rule to speak of what is still under the investigation of justice. But one piece of news I can give you, and that is, of the hot work we have on hand. The French have landed in Alexandria, and I should not wonder if all prisoners had to make a trip to the Saeed (Upper Egypt), or might be let loose altogether: so cheer up your heart and make ready to go with me to the Waly, where you will have kinder treatment than you have had from the wife of the jailer."

In this strain he kept talking to her, and gazing at her from head to foot, with goatish,

half-closed eyes, as if spell-bound, and surveyed anon the well-formed instep under the glossy white stocking, or attempted to catch her features under the veil, for the intelligence of the French invasion had produced in her mind a stirring-up of new ideas, that abstracted her from Selim Aga, and blunted her perception of his designs. What, if her husband, in the confusion, were to get clear off? But what a fatality, if she should be removed to Egypt and hostile armies should intervene? In the midst of these perplexities, it was announced that the ass, that was to carry Fatimeh to the Waly, had arrived at the quadrangle, when she descended and mounted, attended by Selim Aga and the Waly's eunuch; the jaileress having, as a miracle, refused to take backshish on departure, and making the staircase resound with the words, "Slut, traitoress, and scorpion."

The house of our friend, the Waly, was dirtier than ever, and crowded with applicants, so that Selim Aga and his charge had to wait for some time at the foot of the room, while

the Waly himself sat at the upper corner, in a sort of stupor, with, from time to time, lucid intervals of fierce and passionate exclamation, with occasional threats and peremptory orders, not of the most logical description; in fact, as the phrase goes, he had lost his head. The Sheikh of the elevated quarter, called the Castle of Dogs, was representing that the people in his district could get no bread from the baker, who, fearing plunder, had put out his fire and shut his oven.

"These bakers and their shut ovens, and the robbers with their robberies, plague our very souls," said the Waly, "so I must make a severe example. Let him be hanged at the door of his oven. Cavass, there! go with this honest Sheikh-el-Harat, and hang the baker at his own door, as an example."

But the Sheikh represented, hanging by the neck outside an oven, was not likely to be so useful in baking bread to the quarter, as a living man under the threat of the bastinado. To this the Waly at once agreed, and made his clerk write out an order to all the bakers of

Cairo to carry on their business as usual, under threat of severe corporeal chastisement.

The next case was that of one Jusef Keliouby, seized as a robber and accused of attempting to break into a house.

"I want an example," said the Waly, "in the midst of all this confusion, and unless you can clear yourself, you will suffer for it."

But he stoutly protested that it was in consequence of the order that had been given by the Waly, to shut all the gates of the quarter at sunset.

"How so?" said the Waly, angrily, on hearing the wisdom of one of his orders impugned.

"I live," said the man, "in Birgouan on the other side of the quarter, and am well known to all the neighbours. My poor brother, Halil, is deranged in his intellects, and his cries so rung in my ears, that I went out before sunset to compose myself. On my return, I found the gate leading from the bazaar barricaded and no getting through, and I became desperate when I found I could not pass; so I wished

to get into the window of Salih-el-Haggag, so to pass into the interior court, and thus get through, but mistaking the window when I got up, I was seized as a robber."

"I do not know what to believe," said the Waly. "Tell me how your brother showed his madness."

"First, by profound grief, and then by a fit of inextinguishable laughter, which caused all the family to laugh in the midst of their tears. And my brother said, what delightful hilarity—this beats the intoxication of Hasheesh."

On this the man shed tears; and the Waly said,

"You are discharged; I am persuaded you are no robber; but we must put an end to this —where is the crier?"

On which this functionary appeared, and having received his instructions, was heard a minute afterwards, commencing his vocation in the street at the Waly's porch, with the words—"Oh Allah! Oh Adouy! The gates are to be shut at the usual time! All coffee-house keepers and provision-dealers must keep their shops

open, and every man must have a lantern at his door, in order that the robber may be distinguished from the honest man!"

When the turn of Selim Aga and Fatimeh had come, several of the spectators had learned who she was, and the pity and sympathy of the audience were unmistakable.

"Who is this?" said the Waly.

"The wife of Nasif Bey," said Selim Aga.

"Ha!" said the Waly, with a fierce look round the room, as he recollected that he had been very nearly dismissed for not finding her husband. "There is another set of troubles—the new ones are not enough—we must have the old ones too;" but the graceful form and silent resignation of a woman whose crime had been a sacrifice to save the life of her husband, and, perhaps, the reflection that he was still the Waly; and that, even had he been dismissed, he might have sustained no great loss in such a political and military crisis, at once softened him; and he said, with a sort of forced gravity, "You know that you have committed a serious offence, but your case has not been determined

on, and you are by law in the custody of the Cadi himself, who has claimed you from the political power. Clerk, make out the order to Selim Aga; and Selim, take her to the Beit-el-Cadi."

A strange succession of cases were now pressed on the Waly's attention, with which it is not necessary to detain the reader, as Fatimeh was at length transferred to the custody of the Cadi, where she occupied an upper chamber, all the other female prisoners having been discharged, in consequence of the arrival of the French in Egypt; but Nasif Bey being the sworn enemy of Morad Bey, it was resolved to see whether he would turn up; and as it was not at that time quite clear to Morad Bey's limited political sagacity that the Porte was unconcerned in the French invasion of Egypt, Fatimeh was a pledge retained in hand until he saw more clearly.

At the Beit-el-Cadi, Fatimeh had habitable rooms, and a jaileress, who was all civility and sympathy with her misfortunes, and all admiration of her courage and fidelity, which more

than made up to her the contrast which the dull, melancholy walls of the Cadi's house made to the pure bracing air of the elevated castle.

"And tell me, sweet lady," said the jaileress, "what would you relish? Oh! you must hate me," she added, "to think that I am your custodier; but that is fate, and I must do my duty to my husband and poor children. Let me see, a young chicken, with vegetables, and a ragheef of white bread, with rose sherbet—say what you would fancy. I am sure you must hate me, as you hate the sight of these rooms, but I must do my duty."

"May God prolong your life!" said Fatimeh. "No such thing crosses my brain; and as for eating and drinking, it is the last of my cares. I have for days not known a moment free from heavy grief, until your kind heart opened its fountains. Allah requite you—poor woman—a thousand thanks!"

And the jaileress felt quite happy, and her eyes, blacked with kohl, glistened with a tear, as Fatimeh, at her request, related the particulars of the escape of Nasif Bey, but in which

no mention was made of the daughter of the Frank consul.

Fatimeh expected to see no more of Selim Aga; but, to her surprise, she heard, in the course of the afternoon, his husky voice expostulating with the jaileress, who was objecting to his entrance; but was brutally asked in return, how she dared refuse entrance to an officer of the government? and forthwith the door was opened, and Fatimeh hastily covered her face with her veil, on which the rugged and uncouth figure of Selim Aga stood before her.

"To what circumstance do I owe the honour of a visit from you?" said Fatimeh, eagerly, thinking that he came to give her intelligence of her husband.

"That," said Selim, "cannot be told in a moment. I have something secret, something confidential to relate, something that will give you pleasure." Here he smiled, and forgetting her father, the heart of Fatimeh bounded with delight, as she anticipated favourable news of her husband, and Selim going into the inner apartment, Fatimeh followed him thither.

The ruffian carefully shut the door, and sitting down a few paces from Fatimeh, he began in a voice, as if of commiseration,

"I deeply deplore the position into which you have brought yourself: Ibrahim and Morad Bey, both incensed at the incessant plots that have been formed against them, and having certain intelligence that Nasif Bey has taken his departure for Constantinople, seem bent on making an example of you, for it appears that it is through the sanctity of the hareem that all those plots have been hatched against them. Hassan Bey escaped by taking refuge in the hareem of Morad Bey, leaped the window, and killed the sentinel at the door; thus an example is wanted, and I come to say that from certain intelligence which I hear, I am afraid that it will go hardly with you."

"I am resigned to my fate," said Fatimeh. "Am I not to be judged by the Cadi, according to the laws of Islam? Shame on you all!" added she, getting animated; "my crime is loving my husband fondly."

She was about to disclose herself to him

with indignation and horror, as the daughter of a former victim, but he interposed and said,

"Cheer up, all is not lost; a road is open by which you may escape."

"And which road is that?" said Fatimeh, with cold distrust and aversion.

"Listen to me," said Selim Aga. "Nasif Bey is gone to Constantinople, where he will obtain high employment from the Porte, whose cause he has so well served. New palaces, wives, slaves, attendants and gardens will console him for what he has lost. You, Fatimeh, if you were to get free would find a rival in his arms, and Fatimeh would be totally forgotten."

"No, no, no!" said Fatimeh, with vehemence; "if you came here for no other purpose than to calumniate Nasif Bey, your visit might well have been spared."

"Do not be so impatient; to cut the matter short, your life is in danger; promise to forget Nasif Bey, to divorce him, to share my humble fortunes, and then your life is saved, and the prison gates fly open."

"Never!" said Fatimeh; "I would sooner

take to my arms a hideous leper—now, surely, that is plain speaking."

"A leper! indeed," said Selim Aga, in a fit of violent resentment; "the die is cast, and force must assert its superiority."

"What! would you touch the daughter of Raouf Ali Begovich?"

"Raouf Ali!" said Selim, taken a-back for a moment, and opening his eyes confusedly; but he quickly recovered himself, and was about to seize her, when a loud knocking at the door was heard as Fatimeh shrieked, and in another moment it was burst open, and Nasif Bey entered with Khaled, a eunuch, and the Cadi's Naib.

Nasif Bey had heard the struggle, and no sooner entered than he understood at a glance how things stood. Fatimeh, roused to unwonted energy, said,—

"Look at the monster Selim Aga, who betrayed my father to death, and now seeks the dishonour of the daughter and of the wife of Nasif Bey."

The ruffian's first impulse was to defend him-

self and force his way through; but as Nasif Bey and the attendants of the Naib were armed, he attempted to make a sudden bolt out of the room and trust to his heels; but the Emir Mergoush caught hold of him by the jacket as he brushed past, the gold lace of which tore in his grasp, while the ruffian pulling out a pistol attempted to clear the way; but Nasif Bey, with the quickness of a Circassian, had knocked the barrel upwards, so that the bullet lodged in the roof, and the Cavass having seized him by the collar, he was forthwith disarmed and dragged out, too conscious of what awaited him.

This produced such an agitation on the frame of Fatimeh that she was unable to be removed that night; but on the morrow, at break of day, the kind jaileress told her that Nasif would return before noon, military duties having occupied him all the night; but Fatimeh was too impatient to remain, and with many invitations to the jaileress to come and see her at Birket-el-Fyl, she rose, and, with the eunuch in waiting, left the Beit-el-Cadi as the sun was

slowly emerging from behind the minarets and house-tops.

A crowd was assembled at the gate, contemplating what appeared to be some poor man who had fallen down in a swoon; but on approaching nearer she averted her face, as she remembered her father's prostrate body, and now recognized with horror a grim decollated head, placed at the forked thighs of a trunk, laid on its breast, which left no doubt of its being the remains of the hated Selim Aga.

Oh! Nasif Bey, thought she, this does not make our meeting happier.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST CAST OF THE DIE.

We must now return to Sheikh Said, who was at his wit's end for money, before the French invasion, and since that event was not in more prosperous circumstances; for those who had valuables to hide, hid them; those who had debts to receive, dunned their creditors. The money-lender drew together his purse-strings, tempted by the most usurious interest; and even the shopkeepers refused credit for the smallest article; and in a country such as Egypt, where insecurity and misgovernment never allowed the credit system to attain any but a dwarfish growth, the French no sooner landed, than confidence, puny and sickly as it was, died outright; and Sheikh Said,—like

a fox after a long run, and the exhaustion of wind and limb, and of every one of those artful dodges in which experienced debtors display such ingenuity, as to prove that it requires more labour of mind and body to be dishonest and poor, than to be honest and rich—he therefore went daily to the mosques, inveighing against the Franks, and preaching up a fanatical resistance, but secretly was bent on some stroke of violence or perfidy, no matter how reckless or criminal, in order to retrieve his fortunes, trusting to the general confusion, and the chapter of accidents, to escape detection, if not punishment; for as there were no more domestic enemies, and his services in espionage against the Franks being useless, his frequent resource at the castle was unavailable, and his representations of distress not listened to, every available farthing being directed to the preparations for defence.

At length an incident occurred, which seemed to offer a prospect for retrieving his fortunes when they were at the lowest ebb. One morning he was seated in the arbour of his

garden, ruminating on affairs, past, present, and to come, when in walked Sheikh Hamood, with his left eye tied up, from ophthalmia, having come to hear the gossip, of which he was an indefatigable hunter. At another time he would have remarked that the vicinity of the water-wheel was overrun with weeds, and the rest of the garden parched and drooping, the Greek gardener having, from want of pay and food, taken his departure; but attention was now entirely absorbed by public events, so that smaller matters passed unnoticed.

"How are you, Sheikh Hamood? and how is Sheikh Cassim? Sit you down and tell me the news. The sight of a friend in public calamities rejoices my heart," said Sheikh Said, as he returned Sheikh Hamood's salutation with a felicitous cordiality that nothing could disturb, whether the threat of a dun or the death of a friend; for, full of plausible civility to everybody, he hated no one, and loved no one.

"The news are white and black," said Hamood; "the Franks are coming to eat us all

up, and Sheikh Cassim has at length come on the traces of his son, and so he is joyful and anxious. He weeps for grief at the troubles of the town, and weeps for joy at the prospect of seeing his boy again. It is a dreadful crisis to think that these Franks are coming to cut our throats."

"And to carry off our property," said Sheikh Said, turning up the whites of his eyes, as if his investments and capital stood in some danger; which observation he had no sooner made, than an Arab, with a blue checked shirt, who replaced the usual domestic attendants of the Sheikh, entered, and said,

"Ya Saidy! there is no more coffee, and the grocer refuses to give any more on credit until the former coffee is paid."

"There is no power but in God Almighty," said Sheikh Said. "Why do you trouble me with domestic affairs? If you commit another such fault I will discharge you instantly."

"It is not my fault," said the man; "all the shopkeepers in the quarter refuse———"

"No more of your impertinence," said Sheikh

Said; "out of my sight!" and he waved his hand for him to withdraw. "These servants are the plague of one's life; they eat, drink, and sleep as well as their masters, and their chief work is complaint. Believe me, Sheikh Hamood, the rich, and not the poor, are objects of commiseration."

"*Ouigh!*" said Hamood, with his usual *naïveté;* "rich people, in straits for money, are more worthy of commiseration than the poor, when money happens to be plenty with them."

"And what of the boy?" said Sheikh Said, somewhat uneasily shifting his position.

"*Ouigh!* discretion is the word," said Hamood, mysteriously smiling.

"I wish to penetrate no secrets," said Sheikh Said; "and in spite of what has happened, you are every way worthy of Cassim's confidence. I was the other day in a society, and the conversation ran in high eulogy of you."

Hamood was quite delighted at this, and said,

"The fact is, you are a friend of Sheikh Cassim, and I may speak freely to you. It

appears that a heterodox fanaticism has been the cause of the taking away of the boy."

"God curse all heretics!" said Sheikh Said.

"And all those who never pay their debts," said a figure, entering the room. This was Mohammed-el-Ashkar, a short, thick man, with a reddish beard, and a countenance inflamed with rage, who, without saluting or taking any notice of Sheikh Hamood, went straight up to Sheikh Said, and apostrophized him,

"Are you not ashamed to take advantage of a poor man? Your servant has come into my bakehouse and carried off twelve loaves of bread, telling me that the Waly has given his authority for the seizure. Now the Waly has given his authority to keep the bakehouse open, but to sell bread, and not to give it away. Where, Sheikh Said, is the money you owe me? and where is the money for the loaves carried off?"

"Softly, friend Mohammed; you know that in these difficult times every one has a lack of the needful. Not a parah have I received from my lands since the Franks landed. Inshallah!

these Cafirs must be beaten, and then you, Mohammed-el-Ashkar, will be paid threefold. Does a man merit the title of Moslem who withholds his share of sacrifice in such a conjuncture? Bethink you, Mohammed-el-Ashkar, of the religion you profess, and remember that this is a holy war of the believer against the unbeliever."

"I believe in Islam, because it is true," said Mohammed; "and I believe in none of the plausibilities of Sheikh Said. Quit for the past," added he, with a pantomime, as of washing his hands of Sheikh Said; "but if ever your man enters my bakehouse again, he will go out with the flat sole of my slippers about his ears."

So saying, Mohammed-el-Ashkar went out, and, by some legerdemain, the servant of Sheikh Said re-entered with coffee.

"And what is Cassim about?" said Sheikh Said; "what is he doing?"

"The work of an active man," said Hamood, "giving great gifts to the defence, in money and provisions. But to-morrow he is going to Birket-el-Humayoum, to get the valuable jewels

of Nasif Bey's wife put in safety. They are in deposit at the villa of the wife of the Ruznamgi, who has the lands there; but she is afraid of keeping them any longer, lest the French should come that way and plunder them, for it is an open village."

Sheikh Said at first opened his eyes in pensive attention, and then asked, with apparent indifference, "When does he go?"

"To-morrow," answered Sheikh Hamood.

"He had better make haste; the country is in a state of confusion. Why does he not go to-day?"

"He has the two affairs on hand," said Hamood, "preparing his villa at Boulak for the accommodation of the militia; besides, he has received anonymous letters that his son is to be restored to him to-night."

"And then why does he not send you?" said Sheikh Said.

"Why, to tell you the truth, since the disappearance of his son, he has lost confidence; but if I were a rogue," continued Sheikh Hamood, laughing, "I could go and present the token

agreed upon, which is a pair of yellow slippers in a red handkerchief. Praise God, however, if a fool, I am no rogue, and my heart is in the right place."

"No," said Sheikh Said, as if suddenly waking up out of a brown study, "you are an honest man; but why does he not send somebody else?"

"Because the jewels are of immense value."

"And what occasion is there for a token?" said Sheikh Said.

"Because the Ruznamgi's wife does not know Sheikh Cassim personally, and lives at a lone village, a mile off the Nile."

"Birket-el-Farakheen; yes, that is a retired spot," said Sheikh Said.

"No, no! — Birket-el-Humayoum," said Hamood.

"Oh, now I recollect; I have heard that woman talked of," said Sheikh Said. "I have given up the world and its vanities, Sheikh Hamood, and fain would retire too; but this is a crisis, when a man must think of his religion and not of himself."

"*Ouigh!*" said Sheikh Hamood, rising; "and I must be off to Boulak; all the world is gathering there."

"I hope that that station will be assigned me as a militia-man," said Sheikh Said.

"I hope so too, and that our next meeting in this house will be after a brilliant victory."

"If the Franks do not batter it to pieces," said Sheikh Said.

"That cannot be helped; at all events they cannot carry off the desert of Suez, and the delight of its pure air, and that will be a retreat to fly to. My house there is at your service," said Sheikh Hamood.

"I hope, for the sake of Islam, I shall never see it," said Sheikh Said, with a laugh of disgust.

"You might go farther and fare worse," said Sheikh Hamood; "but the sun is rising apace—so, farewell!"

Sheikh Said, after standing for ten minutes in deep study, looking at the ground, to the great astonishment of the newly-come servant, who could not conceive what plant or weed

engaged for so long a time the attention of his master, went suddenly into the hareem, where he no sooner appeared, and flung himself down on the sofa, than his wife assailed him with sharp reproaches for leaving his household so unprovided.

"Ha!" said he, "so it always was, with half of the fourteen wives I have successively married. Instead of consoling and soothing a man, when he comes into the hareem, after the real struggles of life, he must fight a fresh battle with their temper. The worst has come to the worst; our fortunes are desperate, and, without a turn in the wheel, we must beg or steal, for we can borrow no more."

"And is it here," said Zereefeh, "that all your finely-devised plans have ended? Can you get no money from the castle?"

"Not a fuddah," said Sheikh Said. "The people up there need all their spare cash for the means of defence."

"Well," said Zereefeh, "you always said that I was hard-hearted because I never would sell my jewels for frivolous objects. Who was

right? you, that would have parted with them years ago, or I, who have reserved them for this pinch? Say no more," added she, going to her locket; and, taking out a pearl ornament, said, "That will keep house for some time, at least."

"Do not be in a hurry," said her husband; and lowering his voice, he added — "Intelligence has come to me, that offers a prospect of retrieving our affairs."

"A fig for your prospects! have you any money to carry on the household?" said Zereefeh.

"Hold your tongue, you generous, good-natured fool, or I will get into a passion," said Sheikh Said; "and do not take me up before I fall. If you are not to be trusted, I will not open my lips."

"Well," said his wife, "I am dumb."

Sheikh Said then related to his wife all that he had scraped from Sheikh Hamood relative to the jewels. "If we could get hold of them," added he, "it would get us out of all our difficulties; and in Tunis or elsewhere we may

seek another existence: for, Wallah, Cairo is too hot for us. The point is, to know if it is feasible? Do you know of this woman?"

"She is the widow of the wealthy Abbas-el-Ruznamgi, and lives alone at this village, but has servants. So any attempt at violence will be dangerous," said his wife.

"No violence is necessary. Give me a pair of your new slippers, and I will go this very night. But, tell me, who are the persons with whom she has the most frequent relations?"

"With the Frank consul, Moro; she used to have transactions in produce, and also in money matters. But," added Zereefeh, with an air of uneasiness, "this is an alarming business, and rather a heavy venture. If it should fail, you are lost."

"Lala! these are times when something must be risked. The confusion in the land will carry us quite through. I will have all the risk, and you all the profit," said Sheikh Said. "We must make the best of these confusions, for we never can have so good a chance again."

"Well, see you bear yourself stoutly in the

matter, and lay your plans with sufficient care ; for if detection follow, you know your fate."

" I have faith in my destiny," said Sheikh Said. " Come, are we reconciled ?"

" My soul is full of doubt," said Zereefeh ; " and if we were not in the midst of war's alarms, I should never hear of such a proposition."

" Which means," said Sheikh Said, " that as we are in the midst of war's alarms, you enter into my view ?"

" I am full of doubt and disquiet," said Zereefeh, " and hope it may turn out as you wish."

" In short," said Sheikh Said, " you are willing to possess the jewels, but have the fearful soul of a woman. My mind is made up ; it is our sole remaining chance."

CHAPTER VIII.

BOULAK.

A CRISIS had now arrived in the affairs of Egypt. Certain intelligence had come of the progress of the French arms. General Bonaparte was not only in possession of Alexandria, but had occupied Damanhour, and was supposed to be advancing up the western bank of the Nile.

Morad Bey prepared himself to resist him on that side of the river, at a place called Embabeh, in advance of Ghizeh, where his own country-house was situated, a few hours' distance from the foot of the Pyramids; and on the other side of the Nile, Ibrahim Bey occupied Boulak, the port of Cairo, while a line of boats, connected with chains and tackle, tra-

versed the Nile a little below them, to prevent the communication from being interrupted by the ascent of the French flotilla. The Mamelukes had neither disciplined infantry nor an organized field artillery, but the ablest French officers admitted that Morad Bey, in awaiting his enemy on this spot, instead of hastening down the Nile, acted with prudence and ability.

Most of the Beys had hidden their valuables and sent their families up the Nile; and Nasif Bey was not displeased that his wife Hanum should have gone to Beni Souef to await the jewels which Sheikh Cassim was to send her by a sure hand. He had, moreover, given Khaled a room in his palace of Birket-el-Fyl, and had procured him a *tezkereh* of safety, but was too much occupied with preparations to have any further communication with him.

For Khaled, the French invasion had little interest, as he was neither an Egyptian nor a Moslem, and his person being now in safety, he wished to devote himself to two objects. First, the restoration of the boy Halil to his father Cassim, and, secondly, he was devoured by an

intense longing to accomplish his union with Melusina. On the morning, therefore, after he was installed at Birket-el-Fyl, he rose and went in the direction of the north-western part of the town, and found the streets full of anxiety and bustle. Instead of the leisurely walk of Orientals, the citizens might be seen striding a pace that flung robes open as if they were models for an impassioned scripture piece of Tintoretto. There was no laughing and joking now; no contempt of the Franks, but long faces and upturned eyes, and hasty scraps of news, with quotations of verses of the Koran. Men met their deadliest enemies, with whom they had not exchanged words for years; when all was forgotten, and each would relate the last report, and they would close with *Estaana b'Illah !*—"Our trust is in God." At the Bab-el-Hark was the dead body of a Coptic Christian, who had been beaten to death with sticks and stones, through the fanaticism of the passengers. He lay at his last gasp, nobody pitying him, and a quarrel going on about what was to be done with his ass, which brayed

terrifically, held down its head, and put out its tongue, as if it understood the incident and felt for its master.

The crowd was dispersed by a long string of dromedaries and camels at the trot, headed by one on which was a man crying vociferously to clear the way, when they went past, loaded with the kitchen-utensils for the camp at Boulak, their burden jingling and jangling with every step of their trot. Scarce were they past when another procession approached, with loud cries and hubbub, and on a horse, magnificently caparisoned, was the Nackeeb, or magistrate of the Shereefs. Said Omar Effendi, carrying the green banner of the Prophet, on his way from the castle to Boulak, which was the rendezvous of the citizens, followed by a great mob, hallooing with fanatical cries, and who, in order to annihilate the artillery of the hero of Arcola and Rivoli, had armed themselves with clubs and lances, and in the midst of whom were many of the Ayan, or chief citizens of the town, one of whom was Sheikh Cassim, with short tucked-up trousers, with a Mameluke

embroidered jacket, instead of his usual long, light, blue, upper robe, and half cotton, half silk, striped body robe; two large ornamented pistols were at his waist, and at his side hung a sabre, with broad embossed brass scabbard, but, being himself a loose, puffed, elderly man, that had once been fat and was fallen away, he looked quite the reverse of an able-bodied soldier.

No sooner did Said Omar Effendi see the Copt, who was now dead, and asked who it was, and what was the occasion of killing him, than another Copt was hauled out of a neighbouring street, where he had been walking, and was brought up by the nape of the neck. The man was the very picture of terror; the perspiration dropped down his face, which was as pale as death; his lower jaw looked as if he had something in his throat that he could not swallow. He trembled from head to foot, and a nerve or tendon at his temple began to twitch up and down as soon as he saw the dead body of the other Copt.

"All the infidels are in a league against

Islamism," said a sturdy butcher, and he gave him another shake by the nape of the neck.

On this loud cries arose and Said Omar seemed irresolute as to what to say or to do, when old Ali Tcherkies whispered him and said,

"It is better not to damp the spirit of the people of Islam; if they wish to kill the Copt what does it signify?"

"Shame," said Sheikh Cassim, "what honour is there in a mob killing a single Copt," but the riotous cries continued, and he said aloud, "the Prophet fought with lance and sabre, and we howl like dogs."

"But this is a spy," said the butcher.

On this the whole nature of the Copt seemed changed: he trembled not with fear, but with rage, and as his eyes flashed anger he cried so as to be heard over all the voices,

"That is a falsehood: I am the Rayah of the Sultan, and not of the Franks. Their religion is not our religion; they have abolished our Messiah, and I am of the faith of the Cross. Give me a lance or a bludgeon, and I will follow

you to Boulak, to slay the enemies of the Sultan."

"Touch not a hair of his head," said Said Omar Effendi to the butcher, now gaping with surprise, and the mob, which had become silent all at once, made way for the Copt, who, taking a lance from one of the procession, shouldered it, and went on with them towards Boulak.

Khaled had, after the escape of Nasif Bey, attempted to reopen a communication with Melusina, through the house in the Coptic quarter of which she had given him the address; but he could get nothing more for answer through the grated window above, than that "since the troubles, they had barricaded the door, and that they could not undertake to deliver or receive any letter as they did not quit the quarter, and could give no intelligence of the lady in question." When, therefore, Khaled arrived in the Mousky or Frank quarter he found many of the houses forced open, and empty, and others barricaded. The house of Moro was locked up; and going round to the

plantation behind, he looked up to the windows, and saw them all closed; and looking through the key-hole, perceived the garden overrun with rank weeds. A chillness of vague doubt and apprehension came over him as he paced round to the front street. He had not the courage to ask point blank about the fate and fortunes of the Moro family, but seeing the *saky* or water-carrier of the quarter with a small goat's skin of Nile water passing, he asked him what had become of all those Franks, and was answered that one-half of them were in hiding, and the other half in prison in the castle.

"Nothing is to be learned here," said Khaled to himself; "time is precious, and I must get a few words with Cassim at Boulak."

So he mounted a hack ass, and proceeded down to the port of Cairo, and went straight to the villa of Sheikh Cassim, which was now scarcely recognizable to any one who had known it a few brief months ago, when it was the abode of domestic happiness, and the retreat of the wealthy merchant and his beloved family. Every room in the house was occupied with

armed citizens, resting from the heat and awaiting orders. The distinction between hareem and selamlic, or public-room being broken down, Cassim himself sat at the foot of the divan of the Durckaa, receiving the report of the mibasher or steward, that eleven palm wicker-baskets of bread, that he had that day caused to be baked at his own expense for the use of the army, were deficient in the number of loaves: on which he went out to see to the matter himself, and when he had completed his inspection, Khaled approached, telling him that he wished to speak with him in private.

"On what business?" said Cassim, somewhat tartly; for the loss of his son, the death of his wife, and the French invasion, had, in spite of the Koran and his moral principles, considerably interfered with his physical health; and this again had acted on his mental humours, so that his servants said that it became every day more and more difficult to deal pleasantly with him; and to his question "what business?" Khaled answered—

"On a business which does not suit being discussed in the presence of third parties."

This was said with a glance at the steward, but in a tone so low as not to be heard by him, and Cassim looked at him as if he recognised the young man whom he had relieved from prison; and telling him to follow, they proceeded to a narrow winding staircase that led off the court-yard, and ascending it drew forth a small wooden key from his girdle, and opening a door showed Khaled into a private closet looking on the Nile, where Cassim's own bedding and necessaries, somewhat in confusion, showed that he still kept a corner for himself.

"I think I have seen you before?" said Cassim.

"Yes," answered Khaled; "I am the young man who was put in prison for the hire of a camel, and whom you liberated. May God lengthen your life for it!"

"Sit you down, friend, strange things have happened since then, and sharp trials — domestic misfortunes and public calamities; but

God is manager, and in him is the might and the power. I can give no further assistance now. A tall strapping youth like you should have a musket on his shoulder, or be mounted on a horse, with a mace swinging at his saddle-bow."

"I ask no assistance," said Khaled, "but come to offer it. I wish to be heard patiently, and to receive your assurance to inflict no punishment on those who carried off your son, on condition of your getting him back safe and sound."

"Where is he?" said Cassim eagerly; "is he alive and well?" and burst into tears.

"He is," said Khaled.

"May God requite you with his good things!" said Cassim; "small is the service I rendered you, and incalculably great is that you are about to render me."

"No," said Khaled, "I am as yet unworthy of your thanks; it is enough that those who were instrumental in your son's disappearance are first assured that ——"

"What," said Cassim, "am I to under-

stand that you have had any concern in this business?"

"I came here," said Khaled, "to assist you on your solemn promise not to take any measures, either to find out the authors of this cruel act of violence and injustice, or to pursue them with retribution in the indispensable preliminary to the service I propose to render you."

"It is a bitter cup to drain," said Cassim; "and if I had no feeling of vengeance I think that a public example ought to be made of the perpetrators of such an outrage. However, I solemnly pledge myself to use no means to pursue them. But my curiosity to know the parties and their motives is natural. Before everything else, however, where is my son, and when am I to see his face again?"

"He is in Hosh Bardak, in keeping of gipsies."

"Are you a gipsy?" said Sheikh Cassim, eyeing him narrowly. "I think not—what countryman are you?"

"I am a co-national of your own—blood of

one blood, and flesh of one flesh. You are of the nation of Nosairis, and so am I," answered Khaled.

"*Djehennem!*" said Cassim, with violence; "so my suspicions are confirmed. Does your religion tell you to requite a man that takes you out of prison by stealing his son?"

"Not my faith," said Khaled; "I never planned this affair. I now seek to restore to you your son on condition of your making no further inquiry."

"God's will be done," said Cassim in amazement; "the like was never heard of before—either recorded in books, or recited in streets or markets; and tell me, shall I see him this day?"

"You shall," said Khaled; "but tell me, did you not receive the letter I wrote you warning you against sending your son to the garden—?" but a step was heard on the staircase, and the large foolish features of Sheikh Hamood showing themselves at the door, he cried out, *Beshara* (reward for good intelligence).

"*Beshara* for what?" said Cassim, drying up

his tears; "you cannot give me better intelligence than I have now received."

"The Franks are exhausted with heat and fatigue," said Sheikh Hamood; "they expected to find a paradise in Damanhour, which their geographers and astrologers confounded with Damascus; and instead of a land of rose-gardens, as they expected, they are cursing the heat and the hunger; and a Greek, who learned French in France, heard them abusing their learned men, and related to Ahmed the Tunisian that their dissatisfaction was loud all the way to Embabeh."

"Embabeh, indeed," said Cassim, hastily; "are they there? The last accounts left them near Rahmanieh. So they are at Embabeh?"

"Yes, they are," said Hamood.

"For what then, do you ask the *beshara?*"

"For the disappointment and discontent of the Franks," said Sheikh Hamood, looking blank and surprised.

"And their undisturbed march and arrival in the vicinity of Cairo!" said Cassim. "The good news for which you ask *beshara* is the

worst news; and if I were a cross-grained Bey, instead of an unfortunate merchant, I would, instead of giving you a premium for your pretended good intelligence, cut out your tongue for being the first to give the bad news that the enemy, instead of being in the maritime province, was now opposite Boulak."

"Well," said Hamood, "I am always on the alert for good intelligence, and you must take the will for the deed."

"Did you deliver to Sheikh Cassim," said Khaled, "the letter which was sent to you on the morning of the disappearance of his son?"

"I think I did," said Hamood, "but my recollection is very confused."

"Are you sure that Hamood received it?" said Cassim.

"Quite sure," said Khaled.

On this Hamood, cudgelling his recollections, grew red in the face as his blundering and drunkenness reverted to his mind. "If that document is of importance," said he, "I almost think that it is not lost. I remember I had on

my brown *benish*, and having been poisoned by drugs, fell over the ground, and stained it, since which time I have not put it on. Let us see," added he, in great embarrassment, while Cassim in silence turned up the whites of his eyes, as if this last trait was the acme of Hamood's doings.

Hamood then went to the corner of the room, where his *horge* or baggage stood; and pulling out sundry articles of eatables, which, in the fear of scarcity, he had provided, the brown *benish* was at last pulled out, and in its deep ample pocket was the letter in question, unopened, which Hamood now delivered with great glee and satisfaction to Sheikh Cassim, and added, " Better late than never."

Cassim, without saying a word, gave him a severe look, and opening the letter, read the warning, which, had it been delivered in time, might have saved the life of his wife, and months of grief. He then handed the letter to Hamood, to make him aware of the extent of the evil he had done.

Hamood was forthwith on his knees, begging

pardon; but Cassim said, as if to suppress by a violent effort the explosion of his anger, "Think yourself fortunate that this discovery is made after I received intelligence of my son, otherwise you might never have seen the desert of Suez again;—and, if I ever see your face after the expiry of one hour, woe betide you."

"The sight of me after this must make you vomit," said Hamood, in humility; "and I start for Suez directly," and proceeded to arrange his baggage, and dragged it out.

"Stop!" said Sheikh Cassim. "Have you money for the journey?"

"I want no money," said Hamood.

"Take that, you fool," said Cassim, pulling out his purse, and giving him some money.

"Not unless you allow me to kiss your hand," said Hamood.

"There," said Cassim, holding out his hand, "let me never see your face in Cairo again; but, as you are your own enemy, do not be ashamed to let me hear from you when you get into your next scrape."

On which Hamood left the room.

"What! Hamood leaving the camp at the moment when your services are required," said one of the servants of Sheikh Cassim to him, while making his preparations.

"Thank God!" said Sheikh Hamood, "I turn my back on this accursed valley of the Nile, and I am once more on my way to Suez, where the men have sinews of iron, clear heads, and honest hearts; the women are houris on the earth, and all this from the pure air and brackish water. So when I once get there, as the proverb says, 'A malediction on travel, if only for a mile.'"

"This is the camp of Islam," said Cassim, when Hamood had taken his departure, and having drawn out a small English prospect-glass, applied it to his eye, and attempted to see if any movements had commenced on the opposite-side of the Nile. "I must first ask Ibrahim Bey for his orders consequent on the last news, whatever it really be; for, as you see, the news of this man is not much to be depended upon. I forbade him to be a soldier,

for he would have run away at the first shot; and as a scout I am afraid he was not much better. That island of Djezireh shuts out my view, so come with me to Ibrahim Bey, and then we shall see what is to be done."

They now descended, and Khaled accompanied Cassim to the head-quarters of Ibrahim Bey, which were close at hand. As they passed the Zawiet, or chapel corner of Ali, it was crowded with sheikhs, ulema, and townsmen, praying and reciting the Koran, with loud exclamations and multiplied genuflexions and bowing of the head, but not a Mameluke was to be seen there. Nasif Bey at the water's edge, in the intense glow of a July sunshine, surrounded by his people, was superintending the embarkation of horses for the camp of Morad Bey at Embabeh, on the other side of the river, and would rap out an oath instead of a prayer, if a horse showed indocility.

"What news?" said Sheikh Cassim to Nasif; "are we beaten?"

"No," said Nasif, impatiently. "Bonaparte has not yet seen the Mamelukes; but I dare

say, before twenty-four hours, something decided must happen ; we are now pressing every horseman to the other side of the Nile."

"And if he attack this side ?" said Cassim.

"He will never dream of that, with all the force of Morad Bey on his right flank ; and if he think to sup to-morrow in Ghizeh, he must first ride up to the muzzle of our cannon, and then over our bodies."

"God is manager," said Sheikh Cassim, wiping the perspiration from his brow, and leaving the burning open beach, where even the faint northern breeze seemed to have no coolness, and retiring into the neighbouring villa, then temporarily occupied by Ibrahim Bey, they got some relief in an alcove, where Ibrahim sat examining, with great attention and some contempt, the accoutrements of a French officer, which had been picked up on the field of Rahmanieh, and sent up post haste for the examination of the Mamelukes.

"My mind is made up," said Ibrahim Bey. "The whole of this equipment, down to the saddle and bridle, shows no skill, and I am

certain that we shall drive those pigs into the sea."

"Can you spare me on pressing personal business?" said Sheikh Cassim.

"You are not under my order," said Ibrahim Bey; "follow your own affairs where you will, and how you will. If all Cairo had been as prompt in supplies as you, Sheikh Cassim, with less howling in the—" mosques he would have said, but checking himself, added, "the enemy has not dared to set foot on this side the Nile; if he do, we shall expect you at the rendezvous, till then mind your own affairs."

"I hear and obey," said Sheikh Cassim, who then made his reverence, and departing said to Khaled,

"Now for Hosh Bardak, and, please God, shall be once more a father."

CHAPTER IX.

THE HARAT-EL-ATOUF.

The Harat-el-Atouf, in the eastern part of Cairo, was in the first ages of the city inhabited by several Emirs of rank, one of whom, Amadeddin Alkam, was the companion of Sultan Bibars; but for above a century it has been the abode of the wretched poor, and in one of its houses lived Mahmoud, the blind Nosairi, whose house was tumbling to pieces, and, with several holes in the roof, would have been considered uninhabitable in any other city than Cairo, where rain is such a rarity.

No traces of water or vegetation were here apparent. The house inside was full of dust—the court-yard was full of stones and rubbish, and on ascending to the house-top, which was

to be trod only with a great deal of caution, the prospect was bounded by the dilapidated wall of the city on the left, above which arose great mounds of accumulated town dust. The minarets, visible round about, were painted in red and dirty white stripes; the coating of the mounds of rubbish which formed the foreground of the prospect was broken bricks and tiles; and as the sun was shedding its valedictory vermilion rays all around, the people of the Harat-el-Atouf, if asked what was the colour that the Almighty wished to prevail in the world, would vouch for red ochre as confidently as the people of Wolverhampton would stand up for coal black.

Through the exertions of Absalom the Nimble, Abd-el-Aziz had been apprehended, but the French invasion had caused the prison-gates to be opened again. On returning to his own dwelling he found it without a single article of furniture, the place being occupied by noisy Albanians, whom he could not turn out; and the one-eyed girl had taken refuge with another of the nation at old Cairo; and on a safe

part of this house-top, the blind man, with Abd-el-Aziz and Salih, were smoking their pipes after the frugalest of repasts.

"What astonishes me," said Abd-el-Aziz, knocking the ashes out of his pipe on the cement of the flat roof, "is, that no certain intelligence has reached us of Khaled. There was a certain sluggishness in his nature, and a sort of fear and apprehension about him; but I can never believe that it was he that betrayed us to the Waly. It must be the devilry of this Frank woman that has seduced him, for it appears that she is living in Cairo, or was so lately. When I call to remembrance his language and demeanour, it seems as if a blindness had struck him rather than the possession of a really black heart."

"I all along thought him black," said Salih; "and we never took heartily to each other. I tell you, and I repeat it, Halil-el-Tortousy assured me that he saw him this very forenoon at Boulak walking with Sheikh Cassim in friendly discourse, and wearing an Arnaout costume."

"It was certainly his ghost," said Abd-el-Aziz, reflecting; "the very night that Selim Aga's body was exposed after I was let out of prison, I dreamt I saw a dead body lying with the back to me on the Desert, and it must be this young man's. So let the affair remain a mystery until it be cleared up. To seek him in Cairo would be to search for a seal-ring that had fallen into the Nile. Let us thank our stars that we are out of prison. So, long life to the French invaders! for had we not been turned out to make way for the French residents, on the approach of their fellow-countryman, our soles would have been beaten to jellies; so, long life, say I, to the Franks, and a curse on the Moslems, who are the enemies of our nation and religion!"

"They say," said Salih, "that either the French are Moslems, or that their commander-in-chief is one."

"As we are Moslems when it suits us," said Abd-el-Aziz, with a laugh; "but all the French at Aleppo and Lattakia are Christians."

"And what are the last measures that the Moslems have taken?" said the blind man.

"Batteries from Boulak to Shoubrah, and the ulema in the Azhar, reading the prayers of Boukhari and others, suitable to the occasion; and much good may it do them," added Abd-el-Aziz, with a hoarse laugh.

"They will be defeated," said the blind man, with decision.

"It looks like it," said Abd-el-Aziz; "the Beys are hiding their wealth up the Nile."

"And the pound of powder has risen to sixty nusfs," said Salih.

"Was ever the like of that seen by eyes?" said Abd-el-Aziz.

"Or heard of by the one-eyed and the blind," said the blind man.

"Have we all the ammunition that is requisite for our purpose, in case of need?" said the Patriarch.

"As much as would kill a hundred Sheikh Cassims," said Salih.

"And," said the blind man, "can you count

with certainty on his sleeping this night at Birket-el-Humayoum? for all depends upon that."

"With as much certainty," said Abd-el-Aziz, "as the uncertain contents of the unsealed book of futurity are known. Halil-el-Tortousy, who has his eye on all the movement of Sheikh Cassim, and knows all his affairs so well, says that his visit has reference to the affairs of Nasif Bey."

"Are you not afraid that the boy will cry in the boat," said the blind man.

"We will tell him," said Salih, "that we are taking him to his father and mother. We will land at Birket-el-Humayoum, give Cassim his quietus, which will not last long, and then, hey! for the Nile, and a prosperous voyage to Damietta."

"I wish it may all succeed," said the blind man, doubtfully.

"We may never have so good a chance again," said Abd-el-Aziz; "the country is all in confusion with this invasion."

"Yes," said the blind man; "but you will

find all the coasts closely blockaded, and escape to Syria difficult."

"We cannot recede," said the Patriarch, rising, "you are unwilling to part with your old friends; I understand the feeling. I hope to lay my old bones in a recess of Mount Cassius, but I trust that we may meet again even in this shape."

"I am afraid never," said the blind man.

It is unnecessary to relate all the rest of his conversation, the interlocutors parting with tears in their eyes, but their hearts perfectly hardened as far as the business they were entering upon was concerned. "God prosper you!" was the last word that the blind man uttered, as, after it was quite dark, he accompanied them to the door, and they proceeded to Hosh Bardak, unheeded and unobserved by either the citizens of Cairo, or the remains of the armed force. The bazaars were lighted with a few lamps, according to the Waly's orders; the dead body of a baker was hanging at the bronze gratings near the Bab Zueileh, at the very spot where Toman Bey, the last of

the Mameluke sultans, was executed by order of the Turkish conqueror Sultan Selim, and a crowd of people were wondering and exclaiming at this prompt act of justice or injustice, when a loud cry of "*Dahrak*,—mind your backs," arose, and a *Tahterman*, or litter borne by horses, pressed through the crowd, bearing the wounded body of Ahmed Aga Kashif, both of whose feet were carried off by a chain-shot at the affair of Rahmanieh, and who, from the agitation of the journey, or the unskilfulness of the native surgeon, died at day-break. He kept groaning away while the surgeon was immersed in a calculation of his horoscope; and when it was completed to the astrologer-surgeon's perfect satisfaction, he announced to his patient that he would certainly recover; but, surprised that he gave no answer to so pleasant a message, he held the lamp to his face, and found that he had just expired.

No adventure worthy of mention occurred to Abd-el-Aziz on the rest of his way to Hosh Bardak, where he got admittance with some difficulty into that part of the ruined

palace which was occupied by the gipsy Hassan.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" said Hassan, gruffly, coming outside, and not anxious that they should enter.

"I come on a matter that everybody need not know; on that of the boy that you have in keeping for us."

"Are you alone?" said Hassan, looking round suspiciously, and whispering to the other man to look out at the outer gate, and see that no third parties were waiting.

"Quite alone," said Abd-el-Aziz. "If the Waly were looking after you, his people need make no feints or round-abouts to get at you."

"If you have come for the boy, I think you have as good a chance as we have of coming in for a share of the Waly's goodwill,—but come inside. So saying, the Patriarch entered the comfortless apartment, lighted by a single lamp, the crone sitting in the corner, while the second gipsy bolted the door as he entered, and stood with his back to it.

"What is all this?" said Abd-el-Aziz, with cool severity of manner.

"Only to prevent any one from entering, and hearing our conversation," said Hassan. "We have almost got our necks twisted with this business. What money have you brought?"

"The sum agreed upon, to a parah."

"But what if I should turn the tables on you, and denounce you to the Waly?" said Hassan.

"Is it me that you are attempting to frighten?" said Abd-el-Aziz. "Do you think that I came among such a crew as you to expose myself to insult? No such thing. It is a purchaser for all those stolen goods, rather than to have anything to do with the Waly, that you seem to be in need of. Come, make your choice between the Waly, who pays on the soles of the feet, or one who pays on the palm of the hand. So out with the boy. Touch the gold. There," added Abd-el-Aziz, clinking a purse, "is the sum agreed on; but if you dream of frightening me into giving a parah more, or think of touching even a hair of my head, woe to you."

Abd-el-Aziz spoke this with an air of profound contempt, that made the gipsy give up whatever plan or project he might have formed for extracting a larger sum from the strangers. He whispered a few moments with the other gipsy, and then absenting himself for a few minutes, returned with the boy Halil, whom confinement had rendered pale and wan, and whose clothes being worn to rags, would scarcely have enabled his parent to recognise him; while the feeble light of the lamp was so strong to his unaccustomed eyes that he held up his little hands to keep off the glare.

"Come along, my boy," said Abd-el-Aziz; "your imprisonment is at an end. See how the lamp offends his eyes. So come along into the court-yard, and they will get accustomed to the light as we ride along. And now, friend," added he to the gipsy, "have you counted your money?"

"All correct," said Hassan. "Won't you remain to drink a cup of coffee?"

"Time presses," said Abd-el-Aziz. "On another occasion, but now, good night!"

" Good night," said the Gipsy.

" We are taking you to your father," said Salih, outside of the court-yard, who had charge of the asses, and seated himself, with the boy in front of him.

" And to my mother too," said the boy. " Oh, how happy I am !"

" And to your mother too," said Salih.

" The liars ! their hearts are black as this night," said a female voice at the portal.

Abd-el-Aziz never turned to look for the speaker, who had disappeared. This circumstance disturbed him; but, in order not to have any trouble with the boy in the street, he told his companion to push on to Bab Zueileh.

The female in question was no other than Taj, to whom we must now reintroduce the reader.

CHAPTER X.

THE MISER.

The other end of Hosh Bardak was the ruin of the bath belonging to the quondam palace, in which Taj lived with her father and step-mother. The outer apartment showed some faint traces of a mosaic pavement, the mats and bedding on which were of a much cleaner and better description than those in the part occupied by the Nowar. The inner apartment was so dark from ponderous vaulting and sky apertures filled up with rubbish, as scarcely to allow any one from without to perceive what was within. The father of Taj, a man of between sixty and seventy, with long grisly beard, keen penetrating eyes, and hands shrunk like those of a skeleton, was seated on one of

the mats, where his young wife, the step-mother of Taj, arranged for him his chibouque, without a mouth-piece, for that was his only luxury, as old Abd-el-Kader-el-Tantawy was a man of the most intense avarice, and had scraped together by incessant penuriousness, during fifty years, between five and six hundred dollars, which he kept hidden in different places, for, if by bad luck, he had fallen into the fangs of authority, on suspicion of the unpardonable crime of possessing funds in which the government had no partnership, he could, if brought under the bastinado, reveal one of the localities of his treasure, and preserve the others secret.

The difference between the ages of this man and his wife was considerable, half a century at the very least, she having completed her sixteenth birth-day some months before, and being low in stature, looked younger than her step-daughter, whose companion she had been for several years. Cross and malicious in temper, she had quarrelled with Taj, but soon afterwards her activity and cleverness as house-wife, cook, and feminine ironmonger, as well as robust

health and a clear complexion, rather than beauty (for her features were coarse and masculine), induced old Abd-el-Kader to take her unto himself as a wife; and Taj was one day astonished to learn, that the companion whom she hated, and with whom she had quarrelled, was about to become her step-mother. The marriage accordingly did take place after considerable delay, the old Sheikh having held out so as to drive as hard a bargain as possible with her relations, and the negotiation having an appropriate termination by the marriage festivities being on so stringent and economical a scale as to produce a great deal of amusement to the guests — the hautboy player, hired for the occasion, declaring that it was the merriest wedding he had ever seen, so ingenious were the devices to economize.

Taj felt her altered position since the marriage, so she said to her step-mother, "Let the past be forgotten, I will be henceforth your dutiful daughter;" but no sincere affection sprung up between these two persons, and it soon became fully evident to Taj that her aged

father was gradually estranged from her, and more and more subjugated by the strong will and assiduous household attentions of Asmar, her step-mother.

"Mark my words," said Asmar to her husband, shortly after marriage, "no good will come of that girl—what can she be about such a length of time? Listen how loud she laughs, so that all the Hosh rings again."

"Let Taj alone, laughing is no sin," said Abd-el-Kader, "and, by Allah, it is better to laugh than to weep. Strange! that two women cannot live under the same roof without hating each other. Let me not hear another word against Taj," continued the old man angrily, throwing down his chibouque, and getting tired of his wife's efforts to indispose him towards his daughter.

"The daughter must not interfere with the wife, and, by Allah! the wife must not interfere with the daughter."

Asmar sat down with spite and disappointment in her eyes, and said, "I understand, your fancy is past, and now you are tired of me."

"There is now power but in God, the High, the Great," said Abd-el-Kader, grinning with impatience; "the plagues of Egypt, and of Hind and Sind to boot, rest on womankind, for life is intolerable with them and intolerable without them; and man is like the offspring of the bird and the fish in the fable — that in the sea was like to choke for want of air, and on the land was like to choke for want of water."

Taj now re-entered, on which the old man asked her, what kept her so long?

"Works of necessity," said Taj; "the pot I was boiling was a violet decoction for the wounded man, which I took to him; but his mind is diseased as well as his body, and I think if the medicine I gave him for that, took longer to administer than the other, it may do him more permanent good."

"They are a bad set," said Abd-el-Kader, "and it would be well if we could get them out of the Hosh."

"Indeed, you are right," said Taj; "and when next Bairam comes on I should prefer to receive from you as a gift anything from the

bazaars, however cheap and valueless, in preference to more valuable wares purchased from the Nowar; for who knows how such wares may have been come by?"

"Why," said the wife, "should he buy us what is cheap and valueless from the bazaars? —why not buy us new gowns at Bairam instead of finer old wares?"

"My short breathing has begun again," said Abd-el-Kader, abruptly rising; "my hearts! I must be up betimes to-morrow, and it is now the hour of sleep; one knows not what these strange times will turn to; with bitter poverty pressing on my heels, there is no rest for either mind or body from the first peep of dawn to noon-tide, and from noon-tide to the prayer of night. So sleep well, my hearts, for it is time to rest."

Bedsteads or divans were luxuries unknown in Hosh Bardak, and mats on the bare ground supplied their place, the climate of Cairo being so very dry. On the following morning, Taj went out on a tour through the bazaars to sell her goods, while the wife proceeded to the

northern part of the city, in order to lay in a stock of lentils and onions for household consumption; but the poverty-stricken Abd-el-Kader no sooner found them gone, than fastening the rude door on the inside, he proceeded to the dark inner apartment, and having lighted a lamp, plucked a flag out of the floor, removed some loose earth, and pulled out a bag of various gold and silver monies, partly Venetian ducats and Spanish dollars, but mostly Zerrmahboubs, gold coins of the mint of Constantinople, on which, in lieu of the laurelled head of royalty, and the blazon and device, was the cipher of the Sultan.

With an occasional look to the door, lest any one should knock or peep, Abd-el-Kader yielded himself to his intense enjoyment of palpable wealth, examined the various coins, felt their weight and relative thickness, and occasionally paused a moment in the vain attempt to account for the pillars on the dollars, or the mailed knight on the ducats of Venice. He then unbraced his girdle, and taking from it a piastre, added it to the store; for the extraordinary de-

basement of this Turkish coin, which has reduced its value to something like two pence, has taken place for the most part only in the nineteenth century. Abd-el-Kader then carefully replaced the bag, covered it over with earth, and reinserted the stone, practice having given him an adroitness and a facility in this operation which would have surprised a stranger.

He was now about to proceed into the town on his business as a retailer of old iron, when a tall young man darkened the door;—his port was noble, his features classical and regular; and, except a slight squint, even handsome; but his dress was of humble blue cotton, his legs were bare and brown, and large yellow slippers enveloped his feet.

"A salutation to you!" said the stranger.

"Welcome, and blessing," said the old man, looking with curiosity to the new comer.

"You do not recollect me," said the youth. "I am Ali, the son of Abbas, the Ghagar from Birket-el-Sbeeb, in the Fayoum! In short, I am the son of your cousin, and recollect your

coming to us when I was a little boy; but you can have no remembrance of me, who am grown to man's estate."

"Welcome, and a blessing," said Abd-el-Kader, embracing and kissing him on both cheeks. "Sit you down," continued he. "You have no conception how much I am annoyed at not having you to abide here with me, for we have no room. What has brought you to Cairo, and what is your occupation?"

"I am a smith," said the young man, "and my trip to Cairo was to purchase a quantity of old iron."

"And you have come to the right place," said the old man. "There is a place at the back of this room, where, I think, we could put you up without inconvenience, now that I think of it; and if you wish assistance, I am at your service; for, young man, beware of those impostors and sharpers even among our own nation, who would take advantage of your inexperience and ignorance. How did you come here—have you ass or mule with you?"

"No," said Ali, the son of Abbas; "I

came in a boat to Boulak, and my bag is still there."

"Here comes my wife," said Abd-el-Kader. "Look you," continued he, addressing his wife; "forthwith prepare our dinner. We have a stranger with us, to whom all honour must be shown. What can you provide for us to-day?"

"You shall have," said his wife, "such a dish of fat lentils and onions, with fresh bread from the oven, as would make a Vizier lick his fingers after it."

"This is your house," said Abd-el-Kader, with emphasis, to his guest; and when the repast was concluded, he again apostrophised him. "You have honoured me with your presence, and I am delighted that my kinsman has not forgotten old Abd-el-Kader. The Hosh is tumbling to pieces, and our means are small, but you, my worthy kinsman, are welcome."

"What you say comes from the heart," said Ali, the son of Abbas.

"From the depths of the heart," said Abd-el-Kader. "Can I now assist you to purchase some of the iron that you spake of?"

"The iron is bought and paid for," said the young man; "and it was my companion, Habzalam-el-Manfalooty, who made the purchase."

"You have honoured me with your presence," said Abd-el-Kader, with ceremonious politeness; "but where is your companion, Habzalam-el-Manfalooty?"

"At Boulak," said Ali, the son of Abbas.

"Had you been remaining to purchase iron," said Abd-el-Kader, after a few moments of silent reflection, "I should have been happy to remain in order to assist you, and thus delay a journey I was about to take to Kelioub, but, on second thoughts, you would be most comfortable at Boulak. It is a pleasure for one who comes to Cairo, to remain there in preference to this part of the town. One sees the boats passing under sail—one catches the fresh air on the river—and one sees the pyramids in the morning, so when you get back to the Fayoum, do not forget to make ten thousand of my best salutations to all my kindred and nation there."

"That I shall not fail to do," said the young man, "when I get there;" but by no means

taking the hint to move, he added, in a low tone, "before I depart, it is as well to begin upon the business which has brought me here."

"Why did you not begin before," said the old man, gaping with expectation for the communication so long delayed.

"Because it is a delicate business," said the youth, sinking his voice almost to a whisper; "and, besides that, your wife was within earshot. I have not had the courage to say what has been for these two hours at the top of my tongue: the fact is," added he, with some hesitation, "I have heard great eulogies of Taj from the rest of the nation, and I am anxious to become the son-in-law of my respected kinsman, Abd-el-Kader."

"That affair is soon settled," said the old man, with a hoarse laugh and cough. "What sum can you give?" added he, abruptly; and raising his eye-brows, and opening his mouth, looked for an answer to the candidate for a closer relationship.

"Four zerrmahboubs, full weight," said the young man; "this sum I can barely spare, but

as I have heard so much of the worth of Taj, and your fondness for money, you can have them ready and ringing this very night, if you give me your word that I am to have your daughter."

"That cannot be," said the old man, with decision; "for less than eight you must not think of Taj."

"Ya Allah! do not be unreasonable," said Ali, imploring the dogged old Abd-el-Kader: "I have built up a palace of love and expectation in my heart, and if it fall, woe to poor Ali, the son of Abbas—surely, what remains to me is not lost to you, for is she not bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh? Is there anything in the world like the naked truth? No, by Allah! and I confess that I have now been a week in Cairo, and to make assurance sure, sought to see Taj with my own eyes. I followed her in the bazaars, unknown to her, and her fair form, mingled with the accounts I had heard of the goodness of her disposition, filled my soul with the subtle intoxication. Oh send me not back to Beni Souef with the yearning

heart—good Abd-el-Kader, soften thy soul and repel me not."

"Humph," said Abd-el-Kader, "will fine words make the pot boil. Seven zerrmahboubs is my last word. I would not even take that from a stranger, but as I respect and love you as a kinsman, for seven zerrmahboubs you can have Taj."

"If I give all I have," said Ali, "even including my passage-money to Beni Souef, it will not make out the sum you ask. Dear heart, relent."

"You are a comely, persuasive youth," said Abd-el-Kader, but times are hard, and I am old and destitute."

"If that be true," said Ali, looking seriously with his melancholy squint on the griping Abd-el-Kader, "I will ask Habzalam for the money to complete the sum; and if he have it not, I will place my life and labour in bond with a Jew, to eke out this sum."

"Jew indeed!" said the old man; "your love makes you talk nonsense—not a fuddah will you get in that way; try what you can do with

Habzalam—perhaps you may make it out with him. You begin to win on me, and what with your short-coming proposals, and my own necessities, I feel as if between the Nile and the encircled sea."

"I will do so," said Ali the son of Abbas, and took his leave; and having eked out the sum, he was, within a brief period, duly united to Taj. But it is not essential to our purpose that we should describe either the wedding, or what passed in Hosh Bardak, from that period until the day on which Abd-el-Aziz took the boy Halil out of the hands of Hassan, except that Abd-el-Kader had divorced his termagant wife, and had been himself struck down by a paralytic shock.

CHAPTER XI.

TAJ MARRIED.

As the hour of noon was called from the minaret of the mosque of the Sultan Hassan, on the day described in the chapter previous to the last, the intense heat of a Cairo July did not penetrate Hosh Bardak in its full force, for in spite of occasional rain, the thick and massive vaults, constructed of the solid masonry of the period of the Emir Bardak, and the current of air that circulates through the ruined palace, left the interior comparatively cool, except where sunlight, piercing the roof at a neglected aperture, illumined the surrounding darkness with a thick golden beam that faintly repeated in the further recess, disclosed on a mat the father of Taj prostrate and helpless from paralysis, with the

vacancy of second childhood on his once sharp and elongated features, while beside him sat his son-in-law Ali, with his upper tunic cast off, showing his brawny Samson-like shoulders, and handsome but dark bronzed features relaxed in repose, and smoking a short pipe without a mouth-piece, while Taj washed his feet to relieve the fatigue of previous exertion; for after yawning several times, he was at last sliding down the silken slopes of sleep, and then suddenly starting again, he said,—

"Twenty-three camp kettles have I repaired since yesternight, Adjaib! War that brings desolation to the great, helps the purse of the poor Ghagar. Well, all is change. After shallow comes inundation, and after crescent is a moon of fourteenth night."

"And after full Nile and full moon, what then?" said Taj, drying his feet with a coarse towel.

"Did I not say all is change?"

"Yes," said Taj; "like my father, who, poor man, will never do a stroke for himself again as long as he lives."

"What do you complain of?" said Ali. "Has he not my thews and sinews. Come, kiss me to sleep, you sweet coiling rogue."

"Not yet," said Taj. "You shall dine first, and sleep afterwards."

"By Allah! Taj, who is my third wife, is the best I have had. Shall we divorce thee, Taj? No, rather let well alone—rather not quarrel with present happiness."

"Allah speed us—since we were united, each day has flown faster and sweeter than the other—always, save and except what concerns my father's helplessness. I wish my wicked step-mother no ill; but since she was divorced, the Hosh is quieter, by a great deal.—I wish her no ill.—Where may she be now?"

"As I hear, over in the camp of Morad Bey, selling medicine for horses, and charms against the bullets of the Franks."

"And why do these Franks come amongst us?" said Taj.

"An accursed race," said Ali, "that plunder, rob, and steal, and shoot Sheikhs of villages, if they will not give credit. Moreover, they take

young children, slaughter them, and eat them."

"Horrible!" said Taj. "Is that true?"

"As true as that you have washed my feet."

Taj shuddered, as he related the absurd and exaggerated gossip of Cairo at this period; for although a French invasion was no blessing, yet the Devil is not so black as painted by party spirit. And when he spoke of chain-shot, he characterised the French as a race of demons, for instead of single bullets, which kill a man at once, and put him out of pain, they invented double bullets, which maim without killing.

Taj then made a fritter of onions, and her husband having partaken of them, he lay down, and forthwith began to snore loudly, while she prepared gruel for her father.

"How are you now, father?" said Taj.

"Poor, very poor," said Abd-el-Kadir. "Surely you will not abandon me?"

"Abandon my father—no thought of such a thing," said Taj.

"Then give me a few nusfs, just to keep my pocket."

"Have you not your meat and drink," said Taj. "Of what use would nusfs be in the pocket of a man who cannot rise to spend them?"

"Your husband has gained money," said Abd-el-Kader.

"Then it is gained for us both—lie down and sleep," said Taj. "It is not good for you to torment your mind or body thus."

"You foul-hearted Albanian," said the husband, speaking and struggling in his sleep; "you shall pay for the mending of the kettles, if I should split your skull in twain."

"Compose yourself to sleep," said Taj to her father; and on this she laid him in an easy posture, and turned to her household affairs: while her husband snored heavily on during all the day, and until after Night had drawn her sable veil over Hosh Bardak and its inmates, when he was suddenly roused by her, just after she had seen the departure of Abd-el-Aziz and the boy.

"Rise, rise," said she with vehemence.

"Let me sleep, for God's sake," said Ali; "I am exhausted."

"Rise!" said Taj, with impatience.

"Was ever such a troublesome woman seen," said the husband drowsily, repelling her, and averting his head.

"Oh! Ali, Ali! the boy whom we heard of is the son of Sheikh Cassim, and strange men have carried him off from Hosh Bardak."

"What have we to do with that," said the gipsy, in a surly tone, yawning awake.

"Have you no compassion?" said Taj. "Would you not return the son to the father?"

"Let him sleep," said Abd-el-Kader; "Sheikh Cassim will give a rich reward;—I think I have strength to go—give me thy hand and get me an ass."

"Compose yourself comfortably to sleep," said Taj to her father, "I myself will go," and she flung away; when Ali suddenly rising, told her, imperatively, to stop.

"What is all this?" said Ali, when on his legs.

"I tell you that the son of Sheikh Cassim has been carried out of the Hosh by strangers, who have given money to the Nowar. They are

on their way to Babzzueileh — a tall old man on a strong ass, with a boy on the saddle in front of him, and another short man with him; and unless you make haste it will be too late."

The gipsy at once seemed to comprehend it. "I shall know where they took him to," said he, "or there is no virtue in my heels," and in an instant he was off after Abd-el-Aziz.

He had not been gone above a quarter of an hour when loud voices were heard in the court-yard; three lanterns were seen to flash near the gate, which was immediately blocked up with a party of armed men, who were seen to approach to the door of Hassan's part of the Hosh, while two men stood at Taj's door, and a voice from the outside was heard to say,— "Let not a soul leave the Hosh until the boy be produced."

Taj was at first much alarmed; and her father, roused by the voice, began to weep and cry like second childhood; but resuming her courage, she boldly advanced to the door, and asked the man what was wanted.

"You see," said she, "my old father in a mortal terror;—what is the meaning of all this?"

"Who is this woman?" said Sheikh Cassim, dismounting from his horse, and taking one of the lanterns to hold it up to her. "There is no power but in God Almighty! This is the woman I invited at my son's circumcision, whom Hanum accused of fixing upon him the Evil Eye—"

"The eye of the friendly and good," said Taj, confidently.—"You seek your son; well, if you have any chance of getting him again, it is due to me and to my husband who may overtake him."

"What then," said Cassim, in alarm, "is my son not here?"

"You are half-an-hour too late—he was then not in my keeping, but in that of those accursed Nowar at the other end of the Hosh."

Khaled now entered the apartment of Taj, and said, with a voice of alarm,—

"There is no one visible at the other end of the Hosh but an old woman, who can give, or

will give, no account of the boy, and tells us to search and find him if we can."

"My head turns," said Cassim, sitting down overcome.—"Oh Allah, Allah!—has hope fled for ever!"

"Do not despair," said Taj, but listen to me: "first take a draught of water and revive your sinking spirits. You once showed Taj a kindness—she has never forgotten it; and she that was thought to have the Evil Eye learned but a short half hour ago that your son was here. I saw him with my own eyes pass from the hands of those infamous Nowar into those of strangers, who took him to Babzzueileh."

"Babzzueileh!" said Cassim, standing up; "let us be off after them directly."

"Stop," said Taj, "you can never overtake them; it is as much as my husband can accomplish, whom I urged to this errand, to reach it before them;—he sprang, poor fellow, like a gazelle when he heard it was to restore your son, and said he should not return until he had brought word where they had gone to: so you will make most speed by waiting here until his return."

"True as the Koran," said the father of Taj. "I said that Sheikh Cassim would give each of us a suitable donation."

Out flew the purse of Cassim, and several gold pieces were proffered; but Taj rejected them, saying,—

"Reserve your generosity until you see the face of your son once more; there is nothing for it but to wait patiently here until my husband return."

Long and weary seemed the time to Cassim, who ever and anon looked at his watch, asking himself if this were not all a cunningly devised fable, and if he should ever see his son again. While Abd-el-Kader called his daughter, and broke out in whispering invectives against her for rejecting the proffered gratuity, so that Cassim's men said to him,—

"I dare say that old fellow is in league with them, and knows all about the boy."

"If you have aught to say against us," said Taj, who guessed at the tenor of the innuendoes, "say it aloud; to every fair question you shall get a fair answer."

"Let them take their own way," said Cassim, "and Allah give me patience."

At length the husband of Taj entered, apparently knocked up with fatigue, and Cassim listened to his narration with breathless attention.

"I made so good speed," said he, "that I overtook them before they arrived at Babzzueileh, and followed them to the half-way-house to Shoubrah, where they embarked in a boat, the words Birket-el-Humayoun and Sheikh Cassim being repeatedly pronounced by them."

Cassim appeared a moment pensive, and said,

"The plot thickens; let us after them. Girl, what is your name?"

"My name is Latifeh," said she, "but my usual nickname is Taj."

"Well," said Cassim, "you have not forgotten me, and I will not forget you or yours."

"May to-morrow not dawn without the meeting of father and son," said Taj.

"And may Allah relieve us from wretched poverty," said the old man.

But Taj and her husband pointed to their brows, to denote his weakened intellects, and forthwith Cassim departed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WEALTHY WIDOW.

On the right bank of the eastern branch of the Nile, a very little way from the fork of the Delta, is the village of Birket-el-Humayoun, all the lands of which, at the period I speak of, belonged to a wealthy widow named Sitt Ayesha, the daughter of a Ruznamgi, or chief collector in the catastral offices of Egyptian lands, and widow of another person from the same office, which was managed by a small number of wealthy families, so related to each other that they formed a sort of close corporation, the business of the department being all transacted in a hand-writing peculiar to this employment. They were very jealous of any young strangers

entering this office, and very much in the way of receiving handsome presents from tax-payers and landed proprietors, so they were well off—hence the Egyptian saying, "such a one is as rich as a Ruznamgi."

I need scarcely say, that as Mohammed Ali systematically extirpated the landed proprietory, and gradually absorbed all freeholds, this system has ceased to exist, and a change has come over Egypt, not dissimilar from that which is taking place in the continent of Europe; for the modern system of military discipline, which he organized on the destruction of the Mamelukes, enabled him to substitute for a class deriving revenue from the rent of land a salaried Bureaucracy entirely devoted to his orders. Feudalism, in the days of a Richard or a Saladin, left the noble the free peer of the King or Sultan, while the people were slaves. Military discipline and standing armies enabled a Richelieu, a Louis Quatorze, a Joseph the Second, a Russian Emperor, or a Mohammed Ali to turn the noble and landed proprietor into the lackey of the ante-chamber, without

enfranchising the people. Generations elapse, and the people of the continent of Europe, in their frenzy, conquer liberty, but in the drunkenness of Helotry know not how to keep it, whilst true aristocracy has become a shadow of its former self. Thrice happy Britain is the rare exception, for she possesses her aristocracy for liberty as well as for order, and for order as well as for liberty; a ballast in the vessel of state, that resists with ease the upward and the downward pressure, that nearly two centuries ago, in the name of Liberty, said to Royalty, thus far and no further: and in more recent storms, in the name of Order, has averted from our soil the fatal evils of democracy and military despotism, its unavoidable concomitant.

But to return from this digression. The mosque and the bath of the village wre built of stone, but all the rest of it of mud, excepting the house and villa of Sitt Ayesha, which was surrounded with pleasant gardens, if an enclosed space, with scattered palms and a single dark walk of parallel orange trees deserved the name. Sitt Ayesha, besides being wealthy, was chari-

table, religious, and hospitable; and as decorum prevented her from receiving visitors in her hareem, she had caused to be built, in a corner of the garden, a pretty kiosk, with floor above floor for her guests, which was called the Boorg-el-Diafet, or Tower of Hospitality; and from the highest floor of which, open on all sides, was a wide-spreading view of the Nile, from the peak of the Delta, and the pyramids beyond them, to far down in the other direction towards Damietta. Across the water was the flat rich Delta, with its canals and villages clustered in palm-groves, and eastwards was seen the commencement of the great yellow Desert, which, stretching through the Isthmus of Suez, never stops until it reaches the shores of the Persian gulf.

On the evening of the day mentioned in the previous chapter, Sitt Ayesha, covered with her veil and wearing, notwithstanding her wealth, a dress of plain blue checked cotton, sat in her outer garden, in which was the Tower of Hospitality, smoking a pipe and conversing with her steward, Hater-el-Mibasher, which personage

was usually a Copt; but this lady, notwithstanding her reputation for charity and hospitality, had so great an antipathy to the Copts, that she employed a Moslem for this purpose.

"And what news in the village this evening?" said Sitt Ayesha. "What of the Franks?"

Hater, an elderly man, with a head beginning to be grey, a dark sun-burnt countenance, large coarse hands, and a deep bass voice, answered, inclining his head in the blandest manner,

"I heard this evening nothing but the praises of your ladyship for your remaining here, when the enemy is so close at hand, and overrunning the country. They contrast your conduct with that of other rich people, who, seized with panic, have rather thought of saving their valuables, than of remaining and drawing the sword."

"And what," said Sitt Ayesha, "is more valuable than the preservation of the land of Egypt from the fangs of the infidel? Of what use are jewels, lands and funds, if a stranger is to rule us? Oh! when I think of what Islam once was, and what it is now, my heart bleeds. I dare not arm or go to the camp, for once a

woman, always a woman; but Allah forgive me, if I have not a mind, even in my old days, to mount horse, and learn at least to point a pistol, and have my own share in wounds and death. At least, if war come in this quarter, we will tend the sick and wounded, and carry water to those that are thirsty, whether with hot fight, or wounds received."

"Nobly said, my lady," answered Hater; "but do not be offended if I, for instance—a-hem—for instance, dare speak my mind."

"Speak freely," said Ayesha; "if a steward cannot be candid with his mistress, with whom should he be candid?"

"With your encouragement," said Hater, "I am emboldened to say that I really think that if the villagers, in the present state of excitement, were to know that you secretly harboured Franks in your palace, it might diminish your popularity—nay, might expose you to trouble, and still more might expose them to danger."

"And how are the villagers to know? Even a part of my own household does not suspect.

I warrant for those that know, including yourself, Hater, not speaking a word."

"You may well include me, my mistress. Am I not," answered Hater, "your steward and confidant?"

"And if they did know, what harm?" said Ayesha. "Does not the Rayah pay his harage? and all the Franks are not implicated in this invasion. Nor shall I forget, that in the time of Ali Bey, this same Consul's father saved my husband's head, and one good turn deserves another; and as for his poor daughter, what can she have done to merit retribution? The laws of hospitality are for the infidel as well as the believer."

"Lady, you have spoken the words of truth," said Hater, who was a low narrow-minded fanatic, but echoed every word his mistress said.

"Setting apart these obligations," said Ayesha, "what is your notion of these Franks? And none of your exploring my wishes, and echoes of my supposed notions. I speak the truth to the whole world, and I expect Hater not to be behind me."

"There is no power or force," said Hater, opening his eyes, and blandly pretending to look courteously shocked at his mistress's suspicion of his want of perfect sincerity. "Can it be a fault to avoid any abrupt harshness to the widow of my deceased master? God forbid, and forgive. As for the old Consul, he is taciturn and depressed, and sits all day gloomily looking at vacancy, and occasionally asking for his daughter, who lives in the hareem part of your ladyship's house. And when I say to him 'cheer up,' he answers me, 'What an inextricable complication, and at the very time when the marriage of my niece was to take place!'"

"And what think you of the other?" said Ayesha.

"As for the other, who is the intended husband of the girl, he is certainly deranged in his intellects; but they say that he is rich. He keeps talking straight on, the Consul paying no attention, and giving him no answer. One day they broke into a violent dispute; and I asked the Consul, when the other had gone into the lower room, what was the cause of the differ-

ence? and he answered, 'He thinks to make me forget my troubles, by a few sayings of the Greek philosophers.'"

"Who are those Greek philosophers?" said Ayesha.

"Plato, and others," said Hater.

"And what did they say, or write?"

"Plato wrote a book," said the steward, with a look of easy confident erudition.

"What sort of a book?" said Ayesha.

The steward paused an instant; but as he considered alacrity to afford information an essential quality of stewardship, added, "Like Kusset Bibars, or The Thousand and One Nights' Humorous and Witty Tales, with scraps of poetry, and very shrewd observations, but a great deal of abuse of the Moslems, and of our Lord the Prophet."

"The impious beast!" said Ayesha. "Say no more about him. Never let the name of Plato pollute the echoes of this house again; but, tell me, what is the name of the intended husband?"

"A name which begins with an M, which I cannot recollect."

"And has he no other name?" said Ayesha.

"I know of no other," said the steward.

"The Christians have several names in common with Moslems, such as Jusef. Is this person's other name Khaled?"

"I know not," said the steward.

"I wish I knew," said Ayesha, with an air of curiosity, for in her sleep the girl has been heard to pronounce the name of Khaled, a Moslem name."

"That is strange," said the steward. "If I can procure any additional information, I will do it."

"Do so," said Ayesha, "for the girl interests me."

"And as it is now getting dark," said the steward, "I will ask leave to depart, and visit the posts round the village, so as to see that nothing is omitted, in order that we may have timely warning of any danger, or of the approach of either friend or foe."

"Do so," said Ayesha; "and, remember,

that the villagers are to know nothing of the Franks."

"I hear and obey," said the steward, and took his departure.

Night now fell, and Ayesha was about to retire to her hareem, when a clatter was heard on the walk, and Mesrour, the negro, approached to say, that a person had arrived asking an interview with her.

"Who is he?" asked Ayesha.

"He would not give his name, and says that he has business with you."

"What does he look like?"

"An Effendi from Cairo; he has a pair of yellow embroidered female slippers in his bosom pocket."

"I expected him," said Ayesha, quickly; "where is he?"

"In the hall of reception," said Mesrour.

"Tell him," said Ayesha, "that I will be with him directly;—and, Mesrour, see that the great candle of red wax is lighted—and, do you hear me, Mesrour, we have business together

after the coffee and chibouque are served: so stand at the door and admit no one."

"Understood," said Mesrour, who now returned to the house, while Sitt Ayesha went into the hareem, and then passed into the large reception room, with three alcoves, dimly lighted by a solitary thick red wax candle, about two feet in length, where Sheikh Said was seated.

After compliments, he immediately looked about, and finding himself alone with Ayesha, and that Mesrour had retired to the door, he pulled out an embroidered yellow slipper, and holding it up, asked Ayesha if she knew that?

"You are Sheikh Cassim," said she, "and no other."

"Hush!" said Sheikh Said, putting his finger to his lips to enjoin secrecy; for suspecting that the person of Sheik Cassim might possibly be known, he intended to personate only his confidential agent; but the temptation to do the business effectually encouraged his effrontery; and finding that he was supposed to be the actual Sheikh Cassim by the household of Ayesha, he immediately lent himself to the cheat,

and added :—" I am, indeed, Sheikh Cassim ; but it is essential that you alone should know that I am he ; let it be not known in the village ; for in consequence of the war-like state of affairs, I have only been able, with the greatest difficulty, to absent myself from the banners of Islamism ; you understand me ? "

" Perfectly ; and your coming is to me a great relief, for I have been all along rather uneasy about the deposit."

" I can easily understand it," said Sheikh Said ; " with these Cafirs prowling about, and ruining our country, what chance would there be of retaining such a valuable prize as that of the jewels of the wife of Nasif Bey. But I am surprised that you remain here at all, and do not retire up the Nile."

" For two reasons,—first of all, duty to Islam ; and then another thing, the Fellaheen here are bad and faithless ; if I were to abandon my house and lock it up, I should on my return find it plundered—perhaps gutted. So as there is the breadth of the Nile between me and the storms that come from the west, I mean to hold

on; for at the worst, surely the French would never think of harming a poor old woman."

"Traitors within and enemies without," said Sheikh Said, turning up the whites of his eyes in pious horror.

"But you must be hungry and in need of rest," said Ayesha. "In the corner of the outer garden is a tower for my guests, where Mesrour will see that you sup well, and have fresh and fragrant bedding, and in the morning we shall see each other again, when the deposit will be safely delivered into your hands. Nasif Bey's wife told me that you, Sheikh Cassim, wished and advised me to give a paper or receipt for the custody of the jewels,—but I could never have on my hand such a burden. I wish them as safe in my hands as if at the bottom of the Pyramids, but responsibility I flatly declined. So, fare you well, in food as well as in sleep; and, at your departure, the jewels will be delivered."

"But," said Sheikh Said, "it is essential that I should be at Cairo in the morning; I should therefore wish to start from here an

hour before daybreak at least; that will give sufficient time to rest my horse for the back journey. I have brought no servant with me; for the fact is, I have sent all my household to the army, and I ought to be there myself."

"Noble and disinterested man! Allah will requite you. A full hour before daybreak, I will be afoot, and you may start on your journey. Your horse shall be tended as if my own; and Mesrour! Mesrour!" continued she, calling aloud to the black; "do you see that the guest is attended to."

The heart of Sheikh Said palpitated, as Mesrour looked at him, lest he should say, "That is Sheikh Said!" but Mesrour simply made a salutation, significant of obedience.

"And do you hear me?" said Ayesha; "say nothing of Sheikh Cassim's being here to any living soul; and, an hour before daybreak, let coffee be ready, and his horse baited and fit for the journey. And do you hear!" whispered Ayesha; "ask the Frank in the upper floor of the tower to keep as quiet as possible, so that those in the first floor may not know that there

is any one above them. And do you, Sheikh Cassim, eat well and rest well," added Ayesha, addressing him; "and, at the hour that you have appointed, all will be in readiness."

"God be with you!" said Sheikh Said, laying down his pipe and rising.

So, after reciprocal salutations, Ayesha retired to her hareem, and Mesrour, lighting a lantern, took Sheikh Said along the dark walk to the Tower of Hospitality, and, being shown into the first floor, found it to be a neat kiosk.

"We have guests overhead; I think I hear conversation," said Sheikh Said.

"It is only the gardeners, who are sorting their seeds," said Mesrour, with the *nonchalance* of practised falsehood.

But Sheikh Said studied to see as few faces as possible, and felt no disposition to visit the other parts of the tower. So, after partaking of a repast, brought him by Mesrour, and smoking another pipe, he extinguished the light, and lay down on the bed made up for him on the divan; but for several hours, agitated and conscious of guilt, repose kept at a

distance from his pillow. At length, when midnight was long past, and the hour approached when he was to have been roused by Mesrour, fatigue vanquished opposing powers, and Sheikh Said fell into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TOWER OF HOSPITALITY.

When Abd-el-Aziz and Salih, accompanied by the boy Halil, arrived at the spot appointed for their embarkation; he was surprised and displeased to see several other boats there, and a number of lanterns gleaming on the water, and two other persons in his boat besides the man in charge, with whom they were in lively altercation. But Abd-el-Aziz, dismissing the asses, went boldly on board; and Salih, taking hold of the boy, whispered to him,

"Do not speak a word, and you will soon see your father and mother."

"What is the matter?" said Abd-el-Aziz.

"This Aga has seized the boat," said the

man in charge, pointing to a Turk, who stood on the little quarter-deck.

"By what authority?" said Abd-el-Aziz to the Turk; "who are you?"

"I am Nadir Aga; and all boats on this branch of the Nile are no longer to be at the disposition of private parties, but at the public service. That is the short and the long of the matter; so go out and leave me to my duty."

"We know all boats are devoted to the public service," said Salih, "and that is the very reason we are going to Damietta, charged by Ibrahim Bey to bring a cargo of rice for the army from Damietta, with all haste."

"I heard nothing of that," said the Turk. "Where is your order?"

"Better than written orders," said Abd-el-Aziz, "are the express commands of Ibrahim Bey himself; and if I do not do his bidding on such an important occasion, I risk my life. So whether Nadir Aga or not Nadir Aga, I know that any man that puts my life in jeopardy, by hindering the supply of the army with the necessary provisions, puts his own life in

jeopardy." So, without a word more, he, with unparalleled effrontery, pulled out a pistol from his belt, and, deliberately cocking it, told the boatman to start.

"Gently," said the Aga, jumping into the boat that lay alongside. "Why could not you tell your business without getting into a fluster? Is that a way to interrupt an officer in his duty?"

"Why does he not show his order?" said the other Aga, who was rather affronted at the quick retreat of the recognized officer. "We are in force enough to stop them, and punish them for such insolence."

"Let them go," said Nadir Aga; "but wait until he comes back, and if I do not get some of the price of his rice, I shall have him bastinadoed; for now it is too late — There they go down the Nile! Say nothing about it to the Bey. We will catch boats enough. There is another boat passing up, under sail. Put off, and pound that boat. No excuse in this case."

By this time, in spite of a contrary wind, the

boat of Abd-el-Aziz was, with oar and current, rapidly making its way down the Nile to Birket-el-Humayoun, Halil having been put into the half-hold, and told to sleep there on the straw, until he was called. And it was towards morning when they arrived at Birket-el-Humayoun, where Abd-el-Aziz and Salih disembarked, leaving Halil in the half-hold, with instructions to the boatmen to wait for them, while they transacted a little business. They were somewhat at a loss in the darkness of the night to find their way; but a man who sat on a mat, armed with a long stick, and rising to ask who they were, was answered by Salih, that they had business at the widow's house; and the man seeing that they were dressed as Arabs, and speaking his language, conceived that, as they could not possibly be Franks, he had no business to interrupt them, especially as they were going to Sitt Ayesha.

"The nearest way to the Sitt's house," said he, "is across the maize-field, until you get into the village, then turn to your left and go down

the bazaar until you see a large white house, which is that of the Sitt Ayesha, and cannot be mistaken."

"Good," said Salih, and they both went according to the direction, and arrived in the main bazaar of the village, which was in perfect darkness and silence, with not even a cock crowing, the only audible sound being the noise made by the mouths of a couple of camels, squatted on their knees outside Ayesha's house.

They now knocked for admission, and a hole being opened by Ahmed, Ayesha's Nubian porter, Abd-el-Aziz asked if Sheikh Cassim was there?

"I do not know," said Ahmed, the porter; "but a guest came here from Cairo last night, and returns thither to-day. I will therefore go and ask Mesrour, and let you know."

In a few minutes the door was opened and Mesrour was there, rubbing his eyes and telling them that he was about to awake Sheikh Cassim, who had spent the night there.

"We have only a single word to say to him," said Abd-el-Aziz; "the dawn is at

hand, and our horses are waiting for us at the end of the village, to return to Cairo; for we are on pressing business."

"Come this way, then," said Mesrour. "I am sure that Sitt Ayesha will be displeased to learn that you have not put up at her house."

"The fact is, that we are in a state of war and hurry. Another time we hope to stay longer," said Abd-el-Aziz.

"True," said Mesrour; "how I should like to pound all their Cafir heads in a mortar!"

"Inshallah," said Abd-el-Aziz, "if promptitude and bravery be on our side, we have nothing to fear."

Mesrour then led them up the orange walk, and said, "Wait until I get a light."

"Where does he sleep?" said Abd-el-Aziz.

"In that kiosk on the first floor."

"Even minutes are precious," said Abd-el-Aziz; "show us the place; we will deliver our message and then have done."

"There is the door," said Mesrour.

They now ascended the staircase, and Salih

said, "I think now, on second thoughts, that we had better have a light."

"Did I not say so at first?" said Mesrour. "I will return immediately," and his steps died away in the orange walk, while Abd-el-Aziz and Salih looked at each other.

"Now is the time," whispered Salih.

"Now," said Abd-el-Aziz, who leaving his slippers at the door, entered the room on tip-toe, and by the dim imperfect, light and the sound of heavy sleep, was directed to the sleeper. To approach like a tiger on his pre closely and noiselessly; then, when within reach to make his dagger spring from its scabbard, and stab to the heart, was the work of a few moments, and he did not wait to watch the low groan, succeeded by the death rattle, which closed the career of Sheikh Said.

"The deed is done," said he to Salih when he precipitated himself down stairs again.

"Did you secure his money," said Salih.

"No," said Abd-el-Aziz indignantly; "the deed was kept free from baser motives."

"Hell!" said Salih with spite. But at this

moment Mesrour approaching with a light, Salih met him and said, "Sheikh Cassim will not start before day-light, and wishes to have an hour's more undisturbed sleep—so we must ask you to show us out, and we will go and get our horses."

"Very good," said Mesrour; "but let me go with you and bring them."

"Come along then," said Salih, and they then went along the street to the end of the village, not a soul stirring except the coffee-house keeper, who was opening his establishment for the benefit of the early risers. But when they arrived at the end of the village no horses were visible.

"Our horses have strayed," said Salih; "where on earth can they have gone to?"

"I hope not scampered back to Cairo," said Mesrour.

"Impossible," said Salih; "look you out for them on the side of the hillock, while my friend examines the other side, and I will go striaght out. Whoever falls in with the horses may bring them to the spot."

Mesrour, therefore, set out running towards the hillock, but Salih said to Abd-el-Aziz, "You had better go to the boat now, and I will join you directly," when they separated, and both making for the Nile bank Salih, the younger man, making the greater circuit, soon overtook Abd-el-Aziz, and rejoining him breathless, said, "Having taken a cubit we might have taken a mile. Oh! the chance lost, perchance we might have had his money."

"Let us be satisfied," said Abd-el-Aziz; "Sheikh Cassim will never speak another syllable, or walk another step on this earth; but what lights are those behind the Indian fig-hedge—stop, let us cower down to avoid observation — a number of persons armed; *Djehennem!*—can that be the boy in the midst of them?"

"My friends," said a voice which no one could mistake for any other than that of Sheikh Cassim, "thanks be to God for success, I feel that I enter on a new life."

"Cassim again in a human shape!" said Abd-el-Aziz in a whisper; "Ali-el-Ala is in

anger with us. All is unpropitious—the anger of God has followed us."

"If we go back to the boat we are sure to be impaled by day-break," said Salih; "let us take to the Desert, and make the best of our way to Cairo, avoiding the high-road and Bilbeis."

"Lead, and I will follow," said Abd-el-Aziz.

"Come along, then," said Salih; "but let us give the village and Mesrour a wide berth."

"All is unpropitious," said Abd-el-Aziz; "I bode no good to our journey's end, and some fatal conjunction of stars hath marred all."

From that moment the energetic exaltation that had buoyed up Abd-el-Aziz changed to sadness and despondency. To this was added the fatigue, heat, hunger, and thirst of a journey along the parched sides of the last southern slopes of Mokattam. At three o'clock on that afternoon in the intense broad glare of a July sun, and within hearing of the roar of artillery that played at the so-called battle of the Pyramids, the decision of which laid the inheritance

of the Pharaohs at the feet of the hero of Rivoli and Arcola, Abd-el-Aziz lay gasping in a hollow and exclaiming—

"Oh for a drop of water—only one drop!"

Life's torrent was parched up, and in a brief quarter of an hour he here yielded his last breath. Salih did not forget to take his dagger, and his purse; and as the vulture tribe seemed to have gathered from the very ends of the earth to this part of Egypt in the rear of the hostile armies, shreds of apparel and a hideous mangled carcase were all that remained of Abd-el-Aziz when Salih went to the spot to make a second gleaning.

CHAPTER XIV.

GENERAL BONAPARTE.

The *début* of the French army in Egypt was a mortifying disappointment to the soldiers that had followed General Bonaparte up the steep acclivity of victory, that began at Millesimo, and never stopped until a convention on the Alps of Styria wrested Lombardy from the Cæsars, and attached the Queen of the Adriatic to the car of victory. The intense heat of the climate, the rags of the people, the absence of wine and other European conveniences in the large towns, had embittered the soldiers, in spite of the surrender of Malta, the capture of Alexandria, and the uninterrupted progress of the expedition to the fork of the Delta and the vicinity of the Pyramids. On the 20th of July,

the army rested at Wardan, and on the following day, at two o'clock, under a burning sun, they halted in a field of watermelons, at Embabeh, in front of the Mameluke force.

The counter dispositions of Morad Bey were by no means destitute of ability. He drew up his cannon in line, his design being to discharge all simultaneously, and then, by a charge upon the French troops with the cavalry, before they had recovered their presence of mind, to annihilate the invading force; but the good glasses of the French staff showed that his artillery was not mounted but fixed. Instead, therefore, of going straight up to the jaws of death, the French Commander-in-Chief ordered General Desaix eastwards, to execute a movement on the left flank of Morad Bey, the troops marching in squares, supported by artillery at the angles. Morad Bey, with the eye of a soldier, at once comprehended that it was his duty to anticipate the completion of a movement which, while it rendered his artillery useless, might drive him into the Nile. He accordingly

charged with all his horse; but this irregular force, however brave, could make no impression on the compact halted squares and well-served artillery of the French army. This iron rampart baffled the antiquated feudal training of the best Mamelukes. Individuals distinguished themselves by prodigies of valour; but there the phalanx stood unshaken, dealing death and destruction around; while the laborious entrenchments and fixed heavy artillery of Morad Bey proved useless. The Mameluke game was here played out, and their unique tactics having completely failed, they had no ulterior combination in reserve; and General Bonaparte, too well aware of the value of the golden moment—"the tide in the affairs of men"—was not the commander likely to give them time to devise something else. A panic among the Egyptians ensued. Those who did not make a hasty retreat to Ghizeh, were driven into the Nile; and scarce was the engagement terminated, when our old friend, Hassan, the gipsy and mock Dervish, might be seen with a long stick and crooked nail fixed in the end of it, fishing

ashore a floating Mameluke, in order to strip him of his girdle and tunic.

It is scarcely necessary to depict the gloom and terror which the news of the victory produced in Cairo. The great majority of persons of note and consequence fled in precipitation from the city, firmly believing that the capital would be surrendered to sack and massacre, in the good old manner of the good old times of the Crusades; for no French army had landed in Egypt since the famous expedition of Louis the Ninth; and Macrizi and other historians take particular care to represent the Franks as the most blood-thirsty butchers that Allah ever permitted to infest the earth. Sheikh Cassim abandoned his villa at Boulak, for his house in the Mergoosh, which he barricaded; and Sheikh Hamood, unable to procure a camel for Suez, in the pressure for conveyance that existed in consequence of the war, pored over that untranslatable tale in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," which describes the sufferings of the Moslem captives, in charge of the cesspools of the convent in the Apennines, near Genoa,

seriously apprehensive of being carried captive to Europe.

The French camp, from a condition of mutinous discontent, was at length in a state of elation; and the sun of the following morning, rising in all its brightness, lighted up the gorgeous array of Cairo minarets across the Nile, while the pleasant gardens of Morad Bey's villa, together with the consciousness of a decisive victory, all conspired, along with the cool calm morning air, to produce in the minds of the French troops an exhilaration that contrasted with their previous dissatisfaction. The camp was all in the bustle of a fair, where the captured horses, caparisons, and dresses of dead or departed Mamelukes, were sold for ready cash. Here might be seen a Nedjd barb which, twenty-four hours before, had proudly borne a Bey, and now was sold for a song; there was a bloated beauty administering a morning glass of Alexandria Rosolia, as a substitute for Cognac, to a party of soldiers, at quadruple prices; and in the midst of a volley of coarse gallantries, which she returned with practised steadiness,

might be heard the lively address of a *Commis aux distributions*, volubly explaining the difference between the French kilogramme and the Turkish oka, for which he received the worst term of reproach then current in the army—that of a *savant*.

Close beside these men were three native figures,—two men, with their hands bound behind their backs, and a woman, with a few medicines slung round her neck, and a small palm-wicker crate of bread suspended from her waist.

"You cannot escape death now," said she, in a low tone, to the two men; "in a quarter of an hour it will be all over with you. What avails secrecy? Tell me where your goods are concealed, and, I swear by Allah, that I will give the half of them to your mother."

"Well, then, do you solemnly promise?" said Hassan the gipsy, whose hands were bound behind his back; "may the curse of Allah light on you if you fail!"

"I do promise," said the woman.

"Well, then, they are in the Hosh, in the

vault, under the place we occupied. There is a trap-door of stone at the further right-hand corner. By scraping away the earth, you will easily find it, with the help of a light."

"It is of no use," said the woman, who was the divorced wife of Abd-el-Kader, and had been a camp follower of the army of Morad Bey; "that quean Taj and her husband would find me out and betray me."

"Have you done saying your prayers and confessing your sins," said the provost-deputy through the interpreter, and was telling his men that they must now march aside to the open space to the east of Ghizeh to do their duty, when a cry arose among the group of soldiers, and "*place, place!*" passed from mouth to mouth as they made a way.

"It is the Emir-el-Asker," said the woman with energy; "ask mercy of him."

On this a young man of short stature, but his pale countenance a model of intellectual beauty, and having a good seat on horseback, rode up and was indeed the *citoyen-general en chef*, who, according to custom, was

going out to ride on the field of battle in order to satisfy his curiosity, and strengthen his experience by an examination of accidents of territory and amounts of mortality. He was about to pass on, but seeing two Arabs on their knees, shouting vigorously, with their hands bound behind their backs while the woman joined in the chorus, he pulled up.

"What is this?" said General Bonaparte.

"General," said the deputy provost-marshal touching his hat, "a poor woman, who is the wife of a Bey, came over here at the risk of her life to attend on her husband as soon as she had heard that he was dangerously wounded, and these people, having robbed and stripped her, were about to kill her to prevent complaint, when she was saved. The people of the village of Ghizeh demand the lives of these men, who do not deny their crime. The Bey's wife is under the sycamore trees there with her husband at the corner of the wall."

"Mercy, mercy!" shouted the men with vehemence, foaming at the mouth with an eloquence and volubility of expostulation which

being Arabic was of course lost on the French military.

"Do your duty," said the General: "where is the Bey's wife?"

General Bonaparte now rode to the sycamores pointed out, while the deputy provost-marshal led them out to execution. Nasif Bey lay almost at his last gasp—his bowels partly protruding and sustained in their place by his wife Fatimeh, who with low melancholy sighs, that came at intervals, had done all that devotion and ingenuity could do. The shawl girdle, that the Arab had attempted to take, was disposed so as to form a sort of tent that, depending from the lower branches of the sycamore, might shield the patient from the sun. Her upper-robe and his own clothes were disposed so as form a couch, and in order that she might supply him with a mouthful of pure water she had improvised a little filter of washed gravel, which imperfectly fulfilled its functions, but showed that her ingenuity had been on the rack.

General Bonaparte contemplated this scene

for a moment with attention, and then turning round to the officer in attendance, said—

"Sulkowsky, I have always been told that women in the East are the mere playthings of our sex—but this women has both love and genius."

"Kill me outright," said Nasif, with a contortion that showed his pain to M. Jomard, who served as interpreter.

"No," said Bonaparte to the same individual; "tell him he must suffer to the end for the chance of living for this woman—he is our prisoner," added he, looking round; "why was he not taken to the hospital?"

"He was only found this morning, some little way in the Desert," said an officer of the neighbouring bivouac, "and the *ambulance* broke down here on its way—his wife found him here, and from suspicions of our intentions they have positively resisted going to our hospital."

"Get Larrey to look to this man," said Bonaparte, "and see what can be done for him."

But science availed nothing with Nasif Bey, and the last grain of the sandglass of life fell as a distant discharge of muskets sent Hassan the gipsy, and his companion to their last account.

When the General had taken his promenade, he returned to the villa, which was his head-quarters, and in the garden of which Signor Moro, *ci-devant* consul of Venice, in close conversation with Colonels Charolais and Lagrange, was awaiting his return.

"This," said Colonel Charolais, a *protegé* of Desaix, and who had made the campaign of Italy, "is the first realization of my idea of Oriental luxury. When I landed at Alexandria, the sandy desert that surrounded the town, the streets tumbling to ruins, the inhabitants covered with rags, and the filth, meanness, and misery, inspired me with a repugnance which the glorious object of the expedition alone prevented from being invincible; but all here is different,—one is as much charmed by those wide-spreading palms and sycamores, and these bubbling fountains, as by

this curious wooden trellis-work that surrounds us."

"And the interior," said Lagrange, a friend of Kleber, and an intense admirer of Hoche and Moreau, "is equally remarkable,—that carved saloon with the satin damask cushions opposite us, in which the General-in-Chief lodges, is a model in its way."

"It is the little Trianon of Cairo," said Moro.

"Then you have been in France?" said Charolais to Moro.

"And shall never forget it," said Moro, whose anti-Gallicanism had entirely evaporated since the events of yesterday; "for there I spent six of the gayest months of my life, when a younger man. Never shall I forget your Gentil Bernard, and his fêtes at Choisy, where a little temple, dedicated to love, and the poetry of gallantry, was hung with garlands and roses that would have charmed an Anacreon himself."

"Ah! *tempi passati*, as the Italians say," answered Colonel Charolais, "a gulf separates

the age of Louis Quinze from ours. The army of Italy has bound round the brows of France laurels somewhat different from those of the Gentil Bernard."

"And the army of Sambre and Meuse?" said Lagrange, with a little brusquerie.

"Have both become the army of Egypt," said a voice behind, which was that of General Bonaparte, who had dismounted at the back gate of the garden, and now entered.

"For shame, gentlemen, let me hear no more of this distinction between the army of Italy, and the army of Sambre and Meuse; both form now a single corps, one and indivisible, like the republic they serve. Signor—I forget your name?"

"Moro."

"Signor Moro, I require a quantity of information from you, and retain you for breakfast. Where is my aide-de-camp? Ah! send me Cafarelli and Le Pere."

On this the General went towards the villa, and sat down on a bench, under a verandah covered with thick vines, and adorned with that

curious wooden screen-work, in the knick-knackeries of which the Cairo turners revel, and in a few minutes General Cafarelli, chief military engineer, with a large cocked hat and wooden leg, which procured him from the Arabs the name of Abon Hatab, the father of wood, came limping to him, and immediately thereafter was followed by M. Le Pere, whose title was Inspecteur des Ponts et Chaussées, or Chief Civil Engineer of the Expedition.

"Cafarelli," said General Bonaparte, "what think you of Cairo?"

"As far as my *reconnaissance* has gone," said Cafarelli, "I see no obstacle in our way; these old Arab walls would fly asunder at the first discharge; their only system of defence would be to occupy the mounds or *mamellons* around it. But I fancy they have no idea of such a thing; and you yourself, General, can better judge than I of their *morale* after defeat. I believe from what I have seen, that they would never think of occupying the *mamellons*."

"Well, if not, we may act on that idea ourselves when we get Cairo. We shall have

plenty of work for you *Messieurs les Ingenieurs*. What say you, Le Pere?" said General Bonaparte.

Le Pere made a bow, and said something of the conquest of Egypt by General Bonaparte having surpassed that of Alexander (the words of which I have not been able to get at with precision).

"It is not Alexander whom we must supersede," said Bonaparte; "it is Albuquerque, the earlier Columbus of the Cape of Good Hope. The Mediterranean must become not only a French lake, but the canal of the Indies. Oh, we have a world of work before us. As soon as we get matters settled here, we must go to Suez and make a *reconnaissance*, and I expect from you a complete trigonometrical survey (*nivellement*) of the space between the two seas."

"And perhaps," said Le Pere, "the discovery of the bed of the ancient canal."

"Yes," said General Bonaparte, "the East must compensate to France for what she has lost in the West. Canada and Louisiana are

light in the counterpoise of Egypt, and in the midst of our hostilities with the Porte, we must show her both her own interest and our glory. If she accept our protection in this country the problem is solved at once."

Some routine business was despatched with electrical rapidity and intelligence, and the circle previous to the breakfast was increased by the presence of several superior officers, to whom General Bonaparte continued to converse in the same strain. The tall figure of Kleber was also there, but he spoke little, and said, aside, to his friend Lagrange, "General Bonaparte is certainly a man of wonderful activity, but we shall see if Egypt turn out another Italy. With the sea, and these devils of English between us and France, I have not such implicit confidence in the steadiness of the supplies and stores requisite for us. It is not enough to acquire, we must be able to keep, and I see no parallel between a purely military expedition, such as this, and the English settlements in India, where commerce and a mercantile marine is both their root and aliment."

"And yet," said Colonel Lagrange, "fear is a stranger to your nature."

"Yes," said Kleber, "but I like a wide margin, for the provision against adverse contingencies. But, if Brueys hold the sea against Nelson, all may be well."

The announcement of breakfast terminated these speculations.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

We have already informed the reader of the antipathy of Moro to the French nation, for, ever after the loss of his place and the greater part of his fortune, he regarded them as the incarnation of the principle of Evil; but the day after the victory of Embabeh, which settled the fate of Egypt for a time, and rendered Morad Bey a fugitive in the Upper Country, he became convinced of the great injustice he had all along done to this nation. He remembered the many gallant and sprightly traits of their character, and although by the treaty of Campo Formio he had become an Austrian subject, he was the very first European to present his respects to the General-in-Chief at the

opening of a new era for the Frank residents in Cairo.

"The delivery of Venice," said Moro, as they sat at *déjéûner*, "from the rule of the most decrepit of aristocracies, at once feeble and cruel, is an epoch in the history of the world. I, for my part, in my conscience served my country, but not this decrepit aristocracy. To you, *Citoyen Général-en-Chef*, the victor of victors, we owe———

"I hear that you Franks have been in great danger during the advance," said General Bonaparte, cutting short his eulogies.

"In the greatest danger," said Moro, "nothing can exceed the fanaticism of those Moslems; and what else can be expected from the reading of such a parcel of nonsense and wickedness as their Koran! What an impostor Mohammed must have been!" added Moro, not fully aware of the efforts that had been made in proclamations to make the Arabs believe that the French held the doctrines of Islamism.

"Mohammed was no impostor," said General Bonaparte; "he realized the instincts

of the better spirits of his own age, and the practical morality of Islamism was certainly a prodigious improvement on that of the Lower Empire at the period of his appearance. I wish I could read the Koran in the original. It is a temple of fantastic Arab tracery, enshrining a single fact, the unity of the Deity; and the ostentatious announcement of the prophecy of Mohammed is only the name of the architect written on the outside of the edifice. This edifice, fantastic and fragile in appearance, and built out of the ruins of the Christian and Hebrew temples, stands, without a single stone displaced after the lapse of twelve centuries, and this is a fact that shows the architect to be no impostor. You cannot in history point out any instance of a Moslem people renouncing their faith. Islamism may sink by polygamy, and moral and political corruption, but there is something in it quite peculiar that repels proselytism. Mohammed was no impostor to a man whose faith is in accomplished facts."

Moro, with all his Levantine accommodativeness, said nothing in echo of a theory so

startling, and General Bonaparte, passing at once from the field of speculation, added—

"Pray give me some account of the danger you yourself ran, for I have been necessarily in the dark as to the fate of the French inhabitants of Cairo."

"Most of the French citizens were taken to prison to the castle; but I and my family managed to escape by a timely warning to the house of a wealthy widow in the country. In a corner of her garden was a Tower of Hospitality, and in one of its chambers I lay concealed with my intended nephew-in-law, who, thank God, is destined to be so no longer, while my niece lodged in the hareem of the lady herself. Provisions were regularly brought us, and, as far as conveniences went, we had not much to complain of, and had a wide prospect of the surrounding country that made up for our imprisonment; but our torture lay in the terrible anxiety and uncertainty, not knowing whether you had been successful; or, if defeated, whether the victory of the Moslems had been accompanied by a massacre of all the

Franks in the country. At length an incident occurred that brought matters to a crisis. Yesterday morning at day-break we were alarmed by cries and a loud alarm in the villa. Led by irresistible curiosity we descended and found in the room below us the murdered corpse of a bad character called Sheikh Said, who had gone thither to swindle the lady of the house out of the jewels of a Bey's wife in the name of one Sheikh Cassim. So we were suspected of having murdered the Sheikh so much respected. The garden was fast filling with people, and we were mobbed and about to fall a sacrifice to popular fury when the real Sheikh Cassim appeared. But this did not appease the fury against us, for all Franks were identified with the glorious arms of the Republic, which, after having struck terror into all Europe, was destined to add Asia———

"*Après*," said General Bonaparte, who disliked amplificatious.

"Well," said Moro, "I am ashamed to say that my intended nephew-in-law, in order to save his life, offered to turn Moslem, while

I was destined to fall a sacrifice to popular fury, had not a young man, a Syrian, interposed, and at the risk of his life saved mine, and perhaps that of my niece, and this not without a severe wound in the hand."

"And is this young Syrian a Moslem or Christian?" said General Bonaparte.

"No," said Moro, "he is of one of the occult mountain faiths, the doctrines of which are kept a secret among themselves."

"Is he intelligent?" said General Bonaparte.

"Extremely so," said Moro.

"Is he so severely wounded as not to be going about?"

"No," said Moro, "his wound is slight."

"Then let him come here to me in an hour."

"I will see," said Moro, "that he wait on you, General."

The *déjeûner* being now ended, they rose from table; and M. Jomard having informed General Bonaparte that the Sheikhs of Cairo had come, and were waiting to confer with him, he went out under the verandah, saying pri-

vately to the interpreter, "Jomard, keep your eye on all the intelligent young Syrians you fall in with; we shall need all the information we can get on that country."

M. Jomard bowed in obedience; and, on arrival at the verandah, they found the Sheikh Mustapha Sawi, the Sheikh Suleyman Fayoumi, Sheikh Cassim, and other persons of importance in Cairo.

"Are these," said General Bonaparte, through the interpreter, "the first Sheikhs in Cairo?"

"Many have fled," said Sheikh Mustapha Sawi, "but we have come to arrange with you."

"And who," said General Bonaparte, "are the chief men absent on this occasion?"

"We consider our first men to be the Ruznamgi (or Collector), the Sheikh Said Omar Effendi, who is Chief of the Shereefs, and others, to be our first men; but as they are not on the spot, we will do what is in our power."

"All that I want," said General Bonaparte, "is the preservation of order. Our war is not

against the Arabs, but against the Circassian and Turkish Mamelukes, who have not only disregarded the French, but live in a criminal state of rebellion against the Porte, and oppression of the poor inhabitants of Egypt. We come as the friends of Egypt, against the Mamelukes. We have gained a signal victory, and will follow it up, until not a single Mameluke in Egypt remain unsubdued; but in the meantime, your Sheikhs, Ulemas, and people may have the most perfect confidence in my disposition to see life and property protected. I propose that we compose a municipal council of seven natives, *ad interim*. Does that suit you?"

"Perfectly," said Sheikh Mustapha Sawi. "Our people are in the greatest anxiety, and I will immediately write to tranquillize them; and then we will compose a list for your acceptance."

"Do so," said General Bonaparte, "and I will rejoin you in half an hour." On which he left them to inspect the different corps, destined for immediate occupation of Cairo, while Sheikh

Mustapha, Sheikh Suleyman, and others immediately pulled out their portable brass, ink, and pen-holders out of their girdles, and the paper requisite out of their breast-pockets, when they commenced writing letters and proclamations to the Ulema and Sheikhs of Cairo; while Sheikh Hamood and others, who had come over with the deputation, rushed out to see the troops.

The scene was magnificent. The dense parallelogram of bayonets glistening in the sun, a lake of burnished steel, realized the "pride, pomp, and circumstances of glorious war." The inundation of the Nile was approaching its climax, and poured its broad waters through the wonderful valley. Rodah beyond it, with its grand alley of sycamores, which adorned it long before it became the garden it now is, was full of all the cool enchanting depths of forest verdure, and contrasted with the crimson-coloured and fretted minarets of Cairo, surmounted by the vast dome of Sultan Hassan, and the ramparts of the castle. The reception of General Bonaparte from all arms, horse, foot, and artillery, was electrical. *Vive le*

General-en-Chef! burst in chorus from every rank and tongue; and when it had subsided, Bonaparte spoke as follows:—

"Soldiers, five years ago the independence of the French people was menaced, but you took Toulon, which was the presage of the ruin of your enemies. The world next heard of you on the summits of the Alps. Scarce two years age, Lombardy, and its all but impregnable fortress, Mantua, was the premium of your matchless valour. Last year you stood victorious at the sources of the Drave and Isongy, and now, on the banks of the Nile, forty centuries look down upon you from the summit of these pyramids. Soldiers! your destiny is splendid. From the English, who are renowned in commerce and the useful arts, to the Bedouin of the desert, you fix the attention of the world. You will die with glory like the men whose names have been inscribed by Time on the rolls of Fame, or, laurel-crowned, return to your homes, where forty millions of citizens will welcome you to their hearts."

The heat of the day was too great to allow the men to be exposed long, and after routine business, which we are not called upon to record, and some subsequent *commerage* with the interpreters, about the private histories of the persons he was about to receive, Signor Moro was admitted to the kiosk, and told him that the young man whom he wished to see was in waiting.

"Well," said General Bonaparte, "I will go out to the verandah directly; but in the meantime, can I do anything for you?"

"Excellency — Citoyen General —" said Moro, in some confusion, "if my local knowledge can be of any service, I should like to be employed in the civil administration."

"I see no difficulty," said General Bonaparte; "but I have a favour to ask from yourself."

"Then it is granted before the nature of it is made known," said Moro.

"You have a niece," said General Bonaparte, "who is young and beautiful."

Moro coloured, and drew himself up with a haughty surprise.

"Who has been for some time," continued Bonaparte, "attached to the young man of whom we speak."

Moro shrank back and said, "You, General, can have no conception of the repugnance of a Frank to a matrimonial connection with an Oriental."

"Even when he has saved the life of the uncle?" said General Bonaparte.

"That is an exception," said Moro, thoughtfully, and added, abruptly, "I resign myself to my fate."

General Bonaparte, followed by Moro, went out to the verandah, where he was astonished to find his niece in conversation with Khaled, the long veil of her Oriental costume covering her face.

"Our European ladies wear no veils," said General Bonaparte, and Melusina, blushing, raised her veil, and curtsied to the Commander-in-Chief.

"Well," said General Bonaparte to Moro, "Is the matter settled?"

"As far as I am concerned, I consent," said Moro.

"How very singular," said Sheikh Hamood, who was a general spectator of all proceedings, "that Bonaparte, the great man, should be so little of stature, and Kleber, as you call him, who is the little general, should be so great in stature. But who is that woman unveiling herself so immodestly?"

"She is a Venetian," said one of the by-standers.

"And as beautiful as a gazelle, although a Cafir," said Sheikh Hamood; "but that is not surprising, for Venice is built on the sea, and the water of it must be brackish. As for me, thank God that I am about to quit this detestable valley of the Nile, and end my days at Suez, where the men are of iron, where the air is pure, the women pure, and the water delightfully brackish."

The scene was not prolonged, the interpreter

gave Moro a nudge that the General, having devoted five minutes to a gratuitous private business, had exceeded his wont; but within a fortnight of that date, General Bonaparte spent more than a quarter of an hour at the marriage party of Khaled and Melusina.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

ARCHÆOLOGICAL AND DOMESTIC

HISTORY OF CAIRO,

FROM THE AGE OF AMRU TO THAT OF THE MAMELUKE BEYS, ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE FOREGOING TALE.

CHAPTER I.

AMRU AND FOSTAT.

Our curiosity commences with the first monument of the Arab invasion of Egypt, the embryo of which was reared by Amr Ebn-el-As, the most distinguished of all the Lieutenants of the Prophet who did not reach the caliphate. The colossal magnificence of Thebes had been succeeded by the elegance of Memphis, which was disinherited, in turn, of its metropolitan pre-eminence, by the maritime opulence and imitative civilization of the city of Alexander; and Fostat, or the City of Tents, was the name

given to the first of that group of Arab towns, which, subsequently extended, and partly united, became Grand Cairo.

Fostat was, according to El-Makrizi, the fourth capital of Egypt; for he mentions, as having existed before the Flood, a city which he styles Amasoos, by which he probably means Thebes. That some peculiarity of physical geography must have determined the position of these capitals, is evident. Thebes is situated near the widest and most fertile part of the valley of the Nile, after it gets clear of the sterile and rocky country below the first cataract; for the Thebaid is, to this day, one of the richest districts of Egypt. In Alexandria, we recognize the only good port of Egypt, as having determined the locality of the capital; while, in Memphis, Fostat, and Cairo, we see cities whose position has been determined by the vicinity of the Fork of the Nile, having three water ways, or canals of approach and departure, thus communicating easily with both Eastern, Western, and Upper Egypt.

Having, in the course of the previous narra-

tive, familiarized the reader, in some degree, with the present manners and appearance of Cairo, as well as with its principal localities, I think it possible that those who have taken any interest in my story, may now feel some desire to know what was the origin of Cairo; what it was in the cradle; how it grew to vigour, taste, and opulence; and how it declined from being one of the first cities in the world. It is not my intention to describe in detail the wars and rumours of wars of which it was the theatre, from the seventh century to our own time. *That* has always seemed to me to be the least important and agreeable part of history; for, unless such narrations be enlivened with characteristic anecdotes, strengthened by philosophic reflections, and varied with picturesque descriptions, they are wearisome and monotonous. In general, the Arab historians are sadly deficient in these qualities; but, from the abundant details that they furnish in the fashion of chronicles, their works are excellent materials for noting the progress of civilization, arts, and manners. When I say arts, it must

be understood as principally confined to their religious edifices and domestic architecture. Like Polyphemus, Arab art has only one eye. For painting, and the sculpture of the human figure, which beam with such lustre in the history of the civilization of the classic lands of Europe, present only darkness on the other side of the Mediterranean, during the Moslem regimen.

I have elsewhere called the Arab civilization "the Indian summer of that of the ancients," and I think that whoever has read my essay on the "Oriental Relations of Venice," in my "Highlands and Islands of the Adriatic," will admit that the term is not too strong. But at the period of their eruption into Egypt and Syria, the Arabs were unquestionably a semi-barbarous race; the only art in which they were proficient being poetry; but all history shows that a taste for the gay science is quite compatible with a very low state of material civilization.

Accordingly, the accounts given of the embryo of those cities which became Cairo, leave upon the historical student the impression that

the manners of the Arabs of that period were of a very primitive nature, and such as we read of as characterizing the first settlements of those nations in the Roman Empire who have since, through the lapse of long centuries, become, in civilization, integral members of the European family. For although the Arab irruption upon the Greek Empire was religious, yet it has many points of a common classification with those northern and eastern surges which successively lashed against and ultimately submerged every portion of the empires of the East and the West.*

No sooner had Amr, whom we shall call by his usual Frank name of Amru, gotten possession of Egypt, than he ordered mosques to be built in all the principal towns, and in

* For the great historical events the reader may refer to Gibbon, and other accessible sources of information, the following Essay, as well as the foregoing Romance, is derived from the materials furnished by the description of Cairo by El-Makrizi and Es-Soyouty, the histories of Abderrahman, Gabarty, and Nikola-el-Turk ; the memoirs of De Sacy and other Orientalists ; lastly, and principally my own harvests gathered in Egypt during the years 1839, 1840, 1841, 1845, and 1846.

Fostat, a little above the present Cairo, was built the celebrated mosque that to this day bears his name, and the surname of which was *Tagel Guama*, or "Crown of Mosques." It had been with only a hundred camels and fifty slaves, and thirty horses, that the Arab colonization of Egypt was begun by Kaisaby ebn Kelthoom, of the tribe of Soum; and this person, having constructed a house and cultivated a garden, its locality was selected by Amru as the fittest place for the new temple of the new religion. Chivalry and fanaticism were the characteristics of these early Arabs; and whatever deductions must be made on account of their reckless disregard for the shedding of human blood, it was their disinterested zeal which rendered them the masters of those noble territories, then inhabited by races disfigured by the mean vices of luxury and the cowardice of mercenary calculation. "This land belongs to me," said Kaisaby, "but let it henceforth belong to Islamism." But the name of Kaisaby was long remembered, and a tree was pointed out remaining in the court-yard up to the time

of Makrizi, who lived in the fifteenth century, as having been a relic of the garden of the said Kaisaby.

In those days was none of that regal or imperial magnificence by which a sultan at a nod could cause a magnificent structure to arise, nor was the Moslem Ritual at that time very clearly defined. Amru himself held the ropes of the scaffold while the key-stone of the Kibleh was put in; it was he that gave it its easterly direction, being supposed to be opposite the place where the sins of men were to be weighed on the last day, the direction of the Kibleh towards the Kaaba of Mecca having been by orders of the Archangel Gabriel. Amru himself once said his Moslem prayers in a Christian church, and the mosque in its first shape had not the niche called the Mihrab. The first mosque was fifty cubits long by thirty wide, with two gates opposite the adjoining house of Amru; and it appears that it was divided from it by the breadth of the street, which was seven cubits. Amru had made a manbar, or pulpit, in it, but Omar, the caliph, wrote to tell him

to take it down. "Do not," said Omar, "suppose that you can sit on a chair, and have the Moslems sitting at your feet." But in the year 93 of the Hegira we find that the custom of a pulpit was finally established, one having been taken from a Christian church for that purpose; and another change which I may note, as indicative of a gravitation towards material convenience, is, that in the time of Moawie, the first caliph of Damascus, mats for praying on were introduced instead of the aboriginal gravel.

I hope the reader pardons me the tedium of such details, for it is requisite to see by what gradual steps the primitive simplicity of the Arabs was changed to luxury and convenience; and, in fact, if we compare the rapidity and brilliancy of the Arab increase in arts and arms with the development of the civilization of those Northern nations that broke in upon the Romans at an even earlier period, it bears somewhat the relation that the rapidity and magnificence of the vegetation of Egypt does to the slow but sturdy grandeur of the gnarled

oak. Fostat rapidly increased in population; the mosque was repeatedly extended, and we soon find two marble pillars, with gilt capitals, become as it were the Rialto of Fostat, and the lounging place of the town, the length of the mosque being now a hundred and ninety cubits by a hundred and fifty; and had Amru risen from his grave, he could no longer have recognised in the mosque which bore his name the humble temple which, at the dawn of Islamism, received the orisons of the people of Fostat.

For a short time another small town, adjoining Fostat, now unmarked by any architectural monument, called El Askar, was the capital of Egypt. I mention this in consequence of its being requisite to keep up the chain; the eighth link of which is in the Moslem annals the establishment of the Castle of Cairo as the seat of government; but as El Askar is associated neither with any great historical name, nor marked by any architectural monument, we shall at once pass it over.

CHAPER II.

THE DYNASTY OF TOULOUN.

We now come to an important political event, the disruption of Egypt from the temporal supremacy of the Caliphs of Bagdad, which, on the extinction of the House of Omeiah, had become the seat of power. Temporal and spiritual empire had both been united in the first Caliphs of the House of Abbas; the embassies of the end of the world had poured their gifts into the treasures of the successors of the Prophet, and the reigns of Haroun-err-Reshid and Mamoon were the Augustan ages of Bagdad; but, a century afterwards, the political edifice crumbles to pieces; each caliph has a mayor of his palace, and at length Ahmed Ebn Touloun, a

Turkish Mameluke or slave, becomes Lord of Egypt.

The capital of this prince was neither Fostat nor its neighbour, Askar; nor have we yet arrived at Cairo Proper; the name of this new place was El Kataë, or the Fiefs, which, by the extension of the suburbs of Cairo Proper, ultimately became a portion of the city.

Ahmed Ebn Touloun, like most of the remarkable men of Egypt, beginning with Amru, and ending with Mahomed Ali, left a remarkable edifice to commemorate his name; but while in our own day the mosque of Amru stands alone in its glory with its noble forest of antique columns to tell where the tents of the early Arabs were pitched the town of Fostat itself has ceased to exist; not so the city of Touloun, for the decadent grandeur of its mosque is still visible in the midst of half ruinous streets with a wretched population.

The locality of the mosque of Touloun was considered propitious for prayer, and Gebel Yeshkor, or "Mount of Thanks," is the name of a slight rocky elevation, on which Ahmed

Ebn Touloun, in the 263rd year of the Hegira, built the mosque which bears his name. It was at first intended that the mosque should have three hundred columns; and the handsomest pillars in the Coptic churches were selected to adorn the metropolitan mosque. Great was the agitation among the Copts. "How," said they, "can these columns be procured without the subversion of our churches?" and a Christian, occupying, as was then usual, an eminent post in the Government, having joined in the resistance, was thrown into prison. "Free me from my confinement," said the Christian, "and I will construct a mosque, corresponding to the wishes of the Prince, without columns, except at the Kibleh." He was then let out of prison, and, presenting himself to Ahmed, presented his plan, which substituted the encloisture of the quadrangle, by a pointed arcade, for the simple colonnade, of which the quadrangle of the mosque of Amru consisted, when in its most perfect form.

The date of the construction of this mosque is 263 of the Hegira, or 876 A.D., which, as

Sir Gardner Wilkinson and Mrs. Poole correctly state, settles the point so much debated, as to the precedence of the pointed arch in Arab, over that of northern architecture ; but although used for Moslem objects, I may call attention to the circumstance of the first known specimen of this variety of the arch having been designed and used by a Christian. But whether taken by this individual from the resources of his own understanding, or from some previous specimen then existing, is not to be discovered.

Ahmed Ebn Touloun, pleased with the design, immediately ordered him to draw for a hundred thousand dinars; and, whatever defects may have obscured the character of this Prince, he was generous and magnificent. Alms of immense value were distributed; and, on the morning of the opening of the mosque, no sooner had the first prayer ended, than the Christian Architect threw himself at the feet of the Prince, and ten thousand pieces of gold rewarded his skill and compensated his previous sufferings.

From the sublime to the ridiculous is only a

step. While the Faithful admired the extent and magnificence of their new temple, curiosity was tickled by an ingenious galley of copper which floated in the fountain of ablution; and Makrizi relates a curious circumstance which occurred soon after the completion of the mosque. The Khatib, after praying for the Caliph, in the litany, forgot to notice Ahmed Ebn Touloun. The Prince had no sooner heard the conclusion, without a recognition of himself, than he ordered his people to inflict on him a hundred and fifty blows. The Khatib had already descended the step from the pulpit, when, crying out, "God save the Emir, above Abbas Ahmed Ebn Touloun!" the Prince smiled, and, turning to his attendants, said, "Give the Khalib, as I ordered, a hundred and fifty—not blows—but pieces of gold."

When in Cairo, I repeatedly visited the quarter around the Mosque of Touloun; but in these streets we see few traces of what the city of El Kataë must have been in the ninth century. Now mounds of rubbish abound, and portals built up with mean bricks. But in the

ninth century, a magnificent castle and palace rose in the centre of the city, having a large *meidan* or hippodrome in front of it; the gate of which was guarded with troops; another gate, where the game of racket was played, and which gave it its name, was thronged with the grandees of Egypt. The gate of the hareem was guarded by eunuchs; another gate of teak-wood was kept by a black porter of gigantic size. The gate that led to the adjoining Mosque of Touloun was called the Gate of Prayer; and the Gate of Lions was so called from effigies of these animals adorning it, after the fashion of nearly all the Byzantine structures of this period.

Ahmed Ebn Touloun was a soldier and a statesman. His son and successor, Homarouiah, was a voluptuary, and spent his time in pleasures and in adorning and extending his palace; artificial palms of gilt brass arose in the gardens, and spouted into basons water that had been artificially conveyed from the Nile, from whence they flowed into canals, through the gardens. An immense aviary occupied the

centre of the garden. The principal apartment in the palace had its walls covered with azure and gold, contrary to the purity of Moslem manners : and in accordance with the traditions of the Lower Empire in its tasteless decadence, the principal apartments were adorned with statues of himself and his wives, with crowns of pure gold and precious stones on their heads.

Homarouiah, having complained of restlessness, a bason was constructed, filled with quicksilver ; and here a leathern bed, filled with air, floated, so that the bed was gently undulated with the quicksilver, and surrounded with curtains of silk. This bason, says Makrizi, was an entirely new invention, which vied with any luxury ever created for regal splendour. On fine evenings, the moonlight, reflected on the quicksilver, was an enchanting sight. But he does not inform us how the luxurious monarch, thus swimming in a sea of quicksilver, escaped salivation.

There was also a lion menagerie in the palace, each den being vaulted, and containing

a lion and a lioness, with one opening on a court yard; and the trap being shut behind it, the keepers used to enter the vaults to clean them out, and having therein placed the allowance of food and water, the lions were let in again. In short, this portion of the palace must have been suggested by the Arena and Vomitoria of the Romans. One of these lions, called Zureek from its blue eyes, was very much attached to Homarouiah, and used to go freely through the palace, being quite tame. The Prince, when dining, amused himself with throwing him pieces of meat, as if he had been a dog. This lion wore a golden collar round his neck, and used to watch Homarouiah while sleeping.

The wives of Ahmed Ebn Touloun, Homarouiah's father, were lodged in a hareem constructed for the purpose; and were treated so profusely that the fowls were afterwards sold at the palace gate, generally minus a wing; so that it was customary when a citizen received an unexpected guest to purchase provisions at the palace. Homarouiah was fond of show; and

mention is made of a corps of Black Guards or Satellites, which, with their dark tint and the sheen of their steel bucklers and helmets, used to arrest the attention of the beholder.

CHAPTER III.

THE FATIMITES.

After an interregnum of anarchy, during which the authority of the Caliphs of Bagdad was, on the fall of the dynasty of Touloun, nominally restored, an event occurred which makes a great epoch in Eastern history, the establishment of the Fatimite Caliphs in Egypt as rivals of those of Bagdad, and representing themselves to be the true descendants of Ali, the son-in-law, and of Fatimeh, the daughter of Mohammed. Ali, by those eminent qualities to which Gibbon has done such splendid justice, was the great name invoked for centuries by the opponents of the house of Abbas at Bagdad, and to this day, the Aliite line of the Imamate is considered the true and orthodox one

by all the sect of Shea, still numerous in Syria, and preponderating in Persia; but the pretensions of the so-called Fatimite Caliphs to legitimate descent from him and the daughter of the Prophet are suspicious.

Of all the men who sprang up contemporaneously with Mohammed, and acted an important part in the great revolution of which he was the author, none is more interesting from character and position than Ali. Mohammed from his eagle glance of human nature, his boundless confidence in himself, and the electric thrill of his eloquence, was eminently qualified to enact the prophet, priest, and king. But Ali has our interest, Ali has our sympathies. His near relation to the Prophet, the splendour of his chivalry, the possession of all those qualities which constitute the perfect knight, stoutness of courage, mildness of manner, greatness of mind, and humility of demeanour, invest with the halo of romance, the vicissitudes of his life and the circumstance of his death.

I need scarcely inform my readers, that on

the death of Hassan, the eldest son of Ali,—Moawieh, the founder of the house of the Omeiah, became Caliph, and for nineteen years reigned in Damascus possessed of the affections of the Syrians, over whom he had been governor, even under the Caliphs Omar and Osman, and no pretension was set up to disturb his title during life. Hosseyn, the younger son of Ali, lived at Mecca, entertaining no doubt of his succession on the death of Moawieh. It became evident, however, in the latter period of his life that Moawieh wished to make the Caliphate hereditary in his own family.

No sooner, therefore, was Moawieh dead, and his son Yezeed proclaimed Caliph, than the first care of the latter was to secure the oath of allegiance of Hosseyn. But all Irak and Confa, the stronghold of the party of Ali, being delighted at the death of Moawieh, sent message after message to Hosseyn, that he should appear among them. Yezeed, the son of Moawieh, had the army of Syria for him; but Hosseyn, besides having a strong party at Mecca, Medina, and throughout Arabia, was the grandson of the

Prophet, and from infancy his fondling, while Yezeed was addicted to strong liquors, the wearing of silks, and, *proh pudor!*—the hearing of music. At length Hosseyn started for the vale of the Tigris. But Obeidallah, the lieutenant of Yezeed, getting notice of all this hostile movement, had time to prepare for his reception.

It was at Kerbela, in the year of our Lord 680, and the sixty-first of the Hegira, that the deadly struggle took place between a few devoted adherents of Hosseyn and the troops of Yezeed; and the account which our countryman, Ockley, gives of the death of this scion of the house of Ali, is so simple and beautiful, that I strongly advise the reader to refer to it.*

It is impossible to say with certainty how

* In illustration of this part of my subject, I may mention a curious fact not generally known. I was one day pursuing my researches in the suburbs of Damascus, near the tombs of the Omeiah Caliphs, one of which I saw without a dome and the interior filled up as high as the walls could contain with stones and pebbles, and, on inquiry, found this to be the tomb of Yezeed, and that to this day, on the anniversary of the death of Hosseyn, many Moslems make a point of throwing a pebble on this tomb.

the line of Ali went, or whether the Fatimites were or were not the descendants of Ali. Makrizi inclines to think so, and urges the circumstances that the descendants of Ali were numerous, and that there was no reason for an impostor being recognised as Imam, and that all the stories throwing doubt on the genealogy of the Fatimites are artifices of the princes of the house of Abbas, at Bagdad. The Cadis of that capital, declaring that the Fatimites were not the descendants of Ali, many erudite men attesting that by their signatures; and Makrizi further adduces, in proof of the validity of the Fatimite pretensions, the circumstance of Motaded, one of the Caliphs of Bagdad, having written a letter to the Aglabite prince of Cairoan, situated in what is now the regency of Tunis, telling him to arrest Obeidallah, the ancestor of the Egyptian Caliphs, which he would not have done had he been an impostor, of whom he could have had no fear. But the descendants of Ali, Makrizi tells us, were the constant objects of the vigilant persecutions of the Abbaside Caliphs, and therefore obliged to

keep themselves concealed, which was the cause of the apparent interruption in the dynasty of Ali. And that, in addition, if this ancestor of the Egyptian Caliphs had been an impostor, that the real descendants of Ali would have had the most palpable interest in exposing the cheat.

But it must be recollected that Makrizi was an Egyptian, and that the Egyptian view of the case was likely to take the strongest hold of an historian who, in his account of the Fatimite caliphs, availed himself so largely of the contemporaneous writing of the descendants of those sovereigns; and it is highly probable that had Makrizi been a native of Bagdad, he would have been equally clear for the legitimacy of the House of Abbas, and the spuriousness of the pretensions of the descendants of Obeidallah to be the true heirs of the successorship to Prophet. The people of Bagdad maintained that the true name of Obeidallah was Said, and the following anathema was, in the time of the Caliph Hakem, sent forth from Bagdad: — "The undersigned declare and

attest, that the man who arrogates to himself the sovereign authority in Egypt, surnamed Hakem (may God condemn him to perdition!) is the descendant of Said, and that Said having come into Morocco, took the name of Obeid-allah, and that all his ancestors — on whom be the curse of God, and the angels appointed to pronounce curses on impostors and rebellious heretics!—who belong in no way to the family of the descendants of Ali, and that the genealogy which they have invented, is a falsehood and an imposture; and that this Egyptian despot, as well as those who preceded him, are Atheists and Magi, who have permitted illegitimate carnal connections—allowed wine, shed blood, curse the prophets, and assumed pretensions to divinity." In short, there seems much to be said on both sides of the question.

CHAPTER IV.

MATERIAL ASPECT OF CAIRO DURING THE FATIMITE CALIPHATE.

Moezz, the so-called Fatimite, and great grandson of Obeidallah, being in possession of a considerable territory in Northern Africa, now invaded Egypt, in the year 969 of the Christian era, the force being to a considerable extent composed of Sicilian Saracens, headed by Gobar Elkaid, also a Sicilian; for in these days Palermo, instead of being a city of Italian gardens and palaces, with a corso and an opera, was a Moslem town, with mosques, baths, and bazaars, and it was after this important event that Cairo Proper was built to the north of the town of Touloun, and was called El Cahirah, and subsequently, by the Venetians, Il Gran-

Cairo, from whence our Frank name of Grand Cairo is derived.

When the town was constructed, each troop of mercenaries built a street for itself, hence the origin of many names now familiar to the Anglo-Indian, who, returned from the Hoogly, admires the architecture of the Bab Zueileh, but is probably not aware that it took its name from a warlike tribe that served under the orders of this enterprising Sicilian general, and so on with other names, for instance, the Barkeey, built by natives of Barcah, and the old Harat-erroum, or Greek quarter, having been constructed by Greeks; for the enemies of Moezz were at that time neither the Latin Crusaders nor the Greek Emperors, but the fierce Karmates from the basin of the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Fatemites had had two palaces, one on the spot occupied by the debtors' gaol mentioned in the tale we have just concluded, and another near the Khalidge, where they used to enjoy themselves in a garden long known as the Bostan-el-Kafoury.

The Eastern palace (at the Cadi's court and

prison) had the so-called Golden Gate, and a balcony and room above it, in which the Caliphs used to sit. Attached to this large palace were two others, one called the Palace of Hospitality, and another the Palace of the Ministers. The space between the two greater palaces was open and unbuilt upon, and, devoted to warlike exercises, this space is now crowded with houses and population, but to this day it bears the old name, Bayn-el-Kasrayn (Between the two Palaces).

The principal edifice of the Cairo of the Fatimite Caliphs, was the great mosque called the Azhar, in which we have laid one of our scenes, and to the history of which we dedicated a passing notice. The building was begun on Saturday, the sixth last day (or last day but five) of Gemad-el-Ewel, 359, and was finished on the ninth last day of Ramadan, 361 of the Hegira, and bore the inscription, "Built by the command of Abdallah, the Vicegerent of God, Abou-Temim Majad-el-Imam-el-Moezz-Ledin Allah, the Prince of the Faithful, on whom, and on whose

fathers and legitimate children, be the blessing of God, by the hands of his servant, Gohar the secretary, the Sicilian." This mosque and university exists to this day, and, as already stated in the course of the work, is the principal seat of Arab theology and general literature; but the edifice itself has been so often repaired and altered, that it is impossible to have any idea of what its appearance may have been in the time of the Fatimite Caliphs.

This is not the case with the other great mosque, which bears the name of the Caliph Hakem, and which, in a ruinous state, is still one of the most remarkable edifices in Cairo. The principal feature of this mosque was, and is, the four large towers at the corners, of pyramidal tendency, and surmounted by cupolas of an Eastern character, that is to say, partaking rather of the architecture of Bagdad and of Persia, than of those modifications of Byzantine which we call Saracenic.

This remarkable edifice was begun by the Caliph Aziz, the son of Moezz, and the father of Hakem. It was opened by Hakem, but

those extraordinary towers were built in the time of the Caliph Mostanser, and at that time it was as much in repute as a college for learning and theology, as the Azar was subsequently, and the *khotbet*, or litany, used to be read here. None of the edifices of that period were faced with hewn stone, but with plaster, the gypsum of the Romans, and still called by the Arabs *gyps*, and the palaces of the Fatimites had a coat of size or paint once every year.

Ebn Yusef, a Mograbbin, gives a curious account of what Cairo was at this early period, by which we see that it was at that time as much inferior to the Barbary coast in the conveniences of life, as it is now superior to the towns of Western Africa. He tells us that the streets of Cairo are narrow, with shops on each side; and from the narrowness, and the large retinues of the viziers, they were often blocked up. Once a cart with stores, drawn by bullocks, met a vizier at the place where the kebab sellers fried their meat, and being unable to pass each other, the smoke was blown into

his eyes and on his clothes, and the foot passengers were nearly suffocated, "I" says Ebn Yusef, "among the rest." The streets are dirty, dark, and filthy, and the roofs of the houses and bazaars are of reeds and clay, preventing the circulation of air and light, and I did not see so bad a place in all the Mogreb. Another of its defects is a want of fountains, so that one may almost die of thirst; for Cairo lies away from the Nile, lest it should be swallowed up. Those that go to the Nile must go to Maks, now the Copt quarter, but then situated on the Nile, as the name of the Bab-el-Bahr, or water port, still denotes, the Nile having receded considerably to the westwards.

Fostat was the place where the shipping lay to before the Nile receded. Ebn Yusef says that Cairo was more noble and genteel to live in than Fostat; its tailors and mercers' shops being also much superior. But Fostat was famous for its manufactory of (parchment?) paper and cross-bows, but the bows of Damascus had a still higher reputation. The Jews were well-dressed, mounted mules, wore

a yellow mark on their turbans, and profited largely by money changing. Bread was very cheap, and if any one wished to indulge in dissipation, there were always games of jousting in the open places, dancing, drunkenness, and hasheesh eating in the bazaars, "which," adds Ebn Yusef, "is quite contrary to the custom of the Barbary coast;" but robbery, with violence, such as was usual among the Mogrebbins, was not practised in Cairo. "Musical instruments," says our author, "are publicly played, wine is publicly drunk, and the prostitutes show their faces, which is all forbidden in Mogreb; but," adds he, "*e contrario*, there are a great many pious and charitable people, and no one need fear false accusations such as in other places, where, if a man dies in your house, you may be accused of being in possession of money that he has left." So much for Ebn Yusef.

In consequence of the great fertility of Egypt, provisions are generally cheaper there than in most other countries, and it is easy to imagine that it must have appeared so to a person coming from the more sterile countries of

Western Africa: this has always been the rule, but the most remarkable exception was the great famine which took place during the reign of the Caliph Mostanser, in the year 457 of the Hegira, which occasioned a series of horrors without a parallel in history, that is to say, that the whole of Egypt became as it were a Medusa wreck.

At the beginning of this tale I mentioned some indicative particulars. I may now add, that the rains in Abyssinia having been insufficient to cause a proper rise of the Nile, the loaves of bread sold by auction at Fostat fetched fifteen dinars, or pieces of gold, that is to say, between three and four pounds sterling; a house, that had cost nine hundred dinars, was exchanged during the height of the famine for twenty rottolas, or measures of meal. An egg cost a dinar. All the beasts of burden were eaten, and the Caliph Mostanser, who had several hundred horses in his stables before this affliction, had only three remaining; and, after all the dogs and cats were eaten, they began with human flesh, cutlets of which were pub-

licly sold, and a woman recounts her escape from being butchered in the following words :— "My flesh being plump, I was seized and dragged into a room covered with marks of blood, and exhaling a smell of dead bodies. I was then thrown, naked, flat on my face, and my hands and feet tied, and, after the excision of cutlets from my hips, they were roasted and eaten; but the men having indulged in wine to excess, fell senseless with drunkenness on the floor. I then began to attempt unloosing the cords that bound me, and having swathed my wounds with cloths, I reached my own house in the neighbourhood; and my relations having informed the guard, the man was beheaded immediately. My wounds are now healed, but my body furrowed with deep scars."

On one occasion, when the Vizier went to the palace mounted on a mule, the animal was seized by the people, and eaten; and the ring-leaders having been crucified, their flesh was cut off from their bones during the night, and eaten.

The famine had attained this terrific excess

as much by panic as by actual scarcity; so the Vizier adopted a stratagem; and calling a general meeting of the bakers and millers, introduced among them several criminals taken out of the prisons. Calling one of them, he said, "Is it not enough that you have deceived the Caliph in his agrarian revenues, and that you add thereto the deprivation of the people of their food? Chop off his head!" added the Vizier to his attendants. So the millers and corndealers supposing this criminal to be a baker or grain-dealer, and not knowing whose turn might come next, were seized with terror, and at once opened their stores; and selling the secreted grain at a reasonable price, the famine soon ended.

CHAPTER V.

THE COURT OF THE CALIPHS.

The government of the Caliphs was that of absolute monarchy, without any restriction. Not only individuals of the people, but the highest officers, could be put to death without ceremony; and of this the insane Caliph Hakem availed himself to a monstrous extent; and during the reign of this extraordinary character thousands of Jews and Christians were, by torture and fear of death, compelled to renounce their religion and embrace that of Mohammed. In these days not only were the Copts, as at present, the clerks and secretaries in the public offices, but we find them in the position of viziers or ministers, and they appear to have been in possession of those basilica

which were built before the Arab Conquest, but of which no traces now remain, all their columns having been gradually transferred to mosques; and in a majority of the mosques of Egypt may be seen columns of white polished marble, which, from their beauty and diversities of size and thickness, appear to have belonged to the primitive Christian churches.

Not only the fear of death and the scourge were employed to produce converts to Islamism, but opprobrious distinctions of dress, and under Hakem the obligation to wear wooden crosses of a certain weight was an addition to the ignominy and inconvenience of the profession of Christianity; nor were those Moslems who were disaffected to the Fatimite Caliphate, or had shown disrespect for the name of Ali, less severely treated. A man, having said that he did not know Ali, the Cadi of Cadis put him in prison, and sent for clerks to examine him; he acknowledged Mohammed as the prophet of God, but denied Ali. The Cadi then spoke him fair to induce him to acknowledge Ali,

which having refused to do, his head was cut off; on another occasion a man was beheaded, having been previously lugged about on an ass, while the crier went before him, saying, "This is the fate reserved for the partisans of Abou Bekr and Omar."

Moezz, the first of the Fatimites, endowed the Azhar; Hakem, his grandson, was also a pretender to the patronage of learning, and having been persuaded by foreign adventurers and flatterers that he was an incarnation of the divinity (which he is to this day looked upon to be by the Druses of Mount Lebanon), he established opposite the present Mosque of Akmar, what he called a palace of science, with an extensive library, in which those who frequented it were supplied with writing materials, and which was intended to be the propaganda of the peculiar heresies of those whom he patronised, who went upon the principle of what they called *internalizing*, or allegorizing, the positive precepts of the Koran. Mostanser, one of the Caliphs, who followed, and altogether the best and ablest of the dynasty,

was a real lover and encourager of learning; his own private library comprising one hundred and twenty thousand volumes.

The Caliphs lived in great pomp. When the Cadi entered, he used to raise his hands and say with a loud solemn voice, "El selam ala Emir el Moumeneen wu rahmat Allāh wu Barakat" (peace be upon the prince of the faithful, as well as the mercy and blessing of God). The Vizier, when he approached the Caliph, leant on his sword; as for the people, a screen or veil shrouded his holiness from them, which they used to kiss on the outside; and no one, with the exception of the Caliph, however high his rank, ever mounted his horse within the court-yard of the palace. At the Festival of Ramadan the Caliph used to entertain all his great officers, who were commanded, not by word of mouth, but by cards or notes. Music was played during the entertainment, and the confectionary used to be in the form of hearts and birds, the table being three hundred cubits long, and covered with the choicest viands; but the Caliph did not himself partake of the fare, and

on the termination of the repast a scramble took place for the remains among the spectators, as at our coronation feasts. The Caliph then mounted to the palace of gold, and sat on a throne, opposite which was a silver table, the dishes of gold, silver, and porcelain, interspersed with vases and flowers, and the loaves of bread of the finest flour, glazed on the top. At the large dinner-table we have described, were dressed twenty-one sheep, three hundred fowls, and two palaces of pastry, twenty-seven hundred weight heavy: the whole entertainment cost the Caliph four thousand dinars. A story is told of two of the guests famous for appetite, Ebn Faiz and El Daylamy, who could demolish a lamb a-piece.

In the great divan of the palace were two ribs of a whale, but Saladin, on the fall of the Fatimite dynasty, sent them as a present to the Caliph of Bagdad, whose ecclesiastical supremacy was restored to Egypt by him. Such was the estimation in which was held what we count valueless.

One of the most curious places in the palace was a place called the Sephineh, where the oppressed used to come, and in which the Caliph was accustomed to sit and hear their story. The form in which they approached him was thus expressed:—"There is no God but God, Mohammed is the Prophet of God, and Ali is the Saint of God." Once, after the measurement of the land, a Coptic clerk crossed over the Nile to register the taxes, and, entering a ferry-boat, refused, on his arrival, to pay his fare, on which the boatman took the bridle off his mule, and, in revenge, the clerk registered eighty dinars against him for forty feddans of land, which he called the Land of the Bridle, and which was in due course stamped with the Caliph's seal. When the harvest season came, the tax was demanded of him, but having declared that he owed nothing, he was beaten and compelled to pay. Having sold his boat, goods, and furniture, he went to the Sephineh, and made his complaint, and the matter having been inquired into,

the Coptic clerk had his ear nailed to the boat, and was ferried backwards and forwards for some time as an example, and in his painful and humiliating position was supplied with meat and drink.

CHAPTER VI.

SALADIN AND HIS TIMES.

The greatest of all monarchs who reigned over Egypt was Saladin, who founded the Eyoubite Dynasty in the year 1171 of the Christian era, on the extinction of the Fatimite rule, and the restoration of the undivided Caliphate in the house of Bagdad. Saladin is altogether the most prominent name in the history of Cairo, for he built the castle, and made it the eighth seat of government in Egypt. He also rebuilt the walls and gates of the city; and, above all, he was the founder of the Military School of the Mameluke Sultans; and not only in a great measure delivered Palestine from the Franks, but long after his own dynasty had succumbed, his political and military

system survived, and rendered, what the Franks called the *Soldans*, a considerable power, which lasted to the Turkish conquest in 1517. And during all the long crusades, the Castle of Cairo was the centre of those operations, of which William of Tyre and Villehardouin have given the Frank aspect. Saladin was himself in youth addicted to dissipation, and considerable duplicity characterised his proceedings towards his Master and Commander, Nureddin; but his character afterwards improved, so as to become one of the most shining in Moslem history.

The Kalat-el-Gebel, or Castle of the Mountain, as, during all the Crusades, was called the Fortress built by Saladin, and now tenanted by the present Pasha of Egypt, grandson of Mohammed Ali, was constructed on a rocky eminence, that had been a place of exercise of Ahmed Ebn Touloun. It was built under the orders of the Eunuch Karakoosh, and was intended to afford Saladin an asylum, in case the Fatimite party, or his master, Nureddin, should again gain the ascendancy. It was

from the numerous pyramids across the river, that Saladin constructed both the castle and the walls of Cairo, for these Mameluke Sultans troubled themselves very little with either preserving or understanding the monuments of ancient Egypt, and extensive as were those constructions of Saladin, his plan was still more colossal, for he intended to have rendered the precipitous castle and the town all encompassed by a continuous wall. He died, however, before his wish could be accomplished.

Fifty thousand prisoners were employed by Saladin in building the citadel and walls of Cairo; so that, although it was a Moslem work, it was of ancient Egyptian materials and of Christian labour. The principal difficulty was the want of water, and that was the reason of the digging of the celebrated Joseph's Well, which is of such extraordinary depth, and so called from Saladin's name, Joseph, or Yousouff, the son of Job (Eyoub). The water was at first better than it is now, being that of a sweet spring; but as they dug further a brackish spring was mingled with the sweet. The principal

apartment was the Hall of Saladin, commonly called Joseph's Hall, and some of the columns of which were still standing in 1846: this part of the edifice having been removed to make way for the mosque of Mahammed Ali. In this apartment, called in Arabic, Iwan-el-Kubeer, was the throne of Saladin, not adorned with brilliants like that of the Fatimites, but of ebony and ivory.

On Mondays and Thursdays the Mameluke Sultans, whose system began with Saladin, used to sit in the so-called Dar-el-Adel, to hear causes and correct abuses, and to be a refuge to the oppressed; the four Muftis of the sects of Shafei, Hanifeh, Mallek, and Hambaleh, used also to be present, the Mufti of Shafei having at that time the precedence; for while the Turkish Sultans, then resident at Iconium or Konieh, and subsequently in Broussa and Constantinople, followed the rite of Hanifeh, while Morocco followed that of Malek; Bagdad and Nablouse, that of Hambaleh; Egypt and Syria, with the exception I have mentioned, always adhered to the sect of Shafei: the differences

between all these doctors of Islamism being mostly on minor matters, and the interpretation of doubtful passages of the Koran, which is in its integrity the recognized law. After the Turkish conquest by Sultan Selim, in 1517, the Mufti of Hanifeh had the precedence, and the decisions of the Cadi of Cairo have since that period been in accordance with those of the sect dominant at Constantinople.

Saladin being the founder of the great military system of the Mameluke Sultans, and of the power that expelled successive armies of the most potent sovereigns of Europe from the Holy Land, it is not uninteresting to take a look at the government, from the Oriental point of observation. The first officer was Naib, or lieutenant, and then followed that of Hadjab, or chamberlain, who was called Hadjeb-el-Hadjab, or the chamberlain of chamberlains; next was the Emir-el-Silah, or sword-bearer and armoury inspector. The Daoudar was the functionary who took the King's orders, and published them, who presented despatches, and was in fact the lord-in-waiting. The Katib-es-Sir was the

privy seal; this important functionary had the entire confidence of the Sultan, used to sit in his presence, and often had more influence than even the first minister.

As to the Mamelukes themselves, the reader no doubts knows that the word means slave (literally the "possessed"), and that they were brought in youth from northern countries to serve in the south. Saladin himself was a Kurd, and long before his accession to power, Turkish and Kurdish mercenaries were employed by the Caliphs of Bagdad and Cairo, as the Pope employs Swiss. In the revolts and riots at Bagdad, we generally find Turks prominent in them. Ahmed Ebn Touloun was a Turk, and ruled Egypt long before the reign of Orchan; and it was principally by Turkish mercenaries that the mad Caliph Hakem managed to remain so long in the exercise of his intolerable rule. Subsequently, however, Circassia became the country which most largely furnished this class of troops. Their apprenticeship was a long and laborious one: they were taught, first of all, reading the Koran and writing; then followed lance exer-

cise, during which time nobody was allowed to speak to them. At first they either resided in the Castle, or were exercised living under tents; but after the time of Sultan Barkouk, they were allowed to live in the town, and the quarter now occupied by the Jews was at that time devoted to the Circassian Mamelukes; but after this period they neglected their religious and warlike exercises, and became degenerate and corrupt.

The armies of the Mameluke Sultans were composed of Kurds, Turks, Circassians, and Greeks, divided into parties of 100 horsemen, and subdivided into parties of 40, 20, and 10 lances, besides archers and javelin throwers on foot—the business of the archers being to keep the horsemen clear of the effects of the missiles of the opposite party; and the business of the lancers being to prevent the footmen from being trodden down by charges of the opposing cavalry. The pay was in Syria less than what it was in Egypt, for what reason does not appear. Once a year the heads, or commanders of 100 cavaliers, received from the Sultan a present of a

caparisoned horse: those of a less rank an uncaparisoned one. The Mamelukes, besides their pay, had rations of meat, bread, candles, sugar, and oil, besides horse forage. Those who exercised at the lance-ring, or what we call recruits, were paid in money; but when they distinguished themselves in war, they had lands by military tenure, as in the other feudal monarchies of Europe; and in Saladin's time there was great respect of property, and the son inherited from the father, which, says Makrizi, made them fight bravely for the country which was to be their own, so that the registry of Fiefs (Diwan-el-Katae), and the Great War Office (Diwan-el-Gioush), were in constant communication. As regards foreigners the Droit-d'Aubaine existed, for in 1279, the ambassador of the Franks of Syria having died in Cairo, his property lapsed to the treasury.

When a Mameluke was elected Sultan, instead of being crowned he mounted on horseback, and the Emirs in their turn carried the Ghashieh, or saddle-cloth, both emblems of a monarchy more military than civil. The

city was decorated and illuminated, and the Emirs, or Generals, (literally Commanders), dined with the Sultan, who was like our kings not a Caliph, or an Emperor, but *primus inter pares*. On such festive occasions, an officer, called the Nazir-el-Beyoot, or Inspector of Houses, was usually present; this was the Court Fool, who had free permission to make what remarks he chose. When either a Sultan or a rebellious pretender was defeated, his drums were burst in token thereof, and when a Sultan died, his bow, quiver, and escrutoire inlaid with ivory, were carried at his funeral.

While the Frank Knights were covered with mail, and generally exhausted by the heat, the Moslems wore dresses much more adapted to the climate, being very ample, while at the same time the turban protected their heads from the sun. The mailed shirts of the Crusaders, however suitable for cold or temperate climates, were certainly unfit for Syrian warfare, as they not only weighed down the warrior,

but attracted the heat. We consequently find that the "Paynims," always sought to disable the horses of their opponents by their cross-bows, and whoever reads their account of the decisive Battle of Tiberias, by Ralph of Coggeshale, must become convinced that it was by exhaustion and thirst that that battle was lost.

The rank of the officers of the Moslem army was distinguished by the length or shortness of their sleeves: the Emirs wore round caps, made of Malatia wool, and dyed red, with small turbans twisted round them. The Kaouks, or furrowed turbans began with Sultan Barkouk, it was then called the Circassian turban, (which was common in Egypt and Syria a generation ago, but is now becoming as rare as a cocked hat in Europe. One or two are still to be seen in Aleppo.) Long boots were worn only by those who had a tenure of lands from the Divan of Fiefs, and therefore were considered a noble distinction. The *civil* dresses of the Emirs were of red satin, and

under them robes of yellow satin, while the end of their muslin turbans used to have the Sultan's cypher in silk embroidery. The Clerks in the public offices were dressed in white silk, made at Aintab in Syria, while the Ulema dressed in wool without embroidery.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAHRITE MAMELUKE SULTANS.

The great disasters of the Franks in the Levant occurred during the reign of the dynasty of Saladin, for, in addition to the victories of this prince, during his life was the failure of the expedition of St. Louis to Damietta; notwithstanding this however, it was of no duration, and ended in 648 of the Flight, or 1250 of the Christan era, and then began the so-called Bahrite Sultans, in consequence of the Mamelukes of the Sultan Negm-ed-din having lodged in Rodah, the Island in the Nile (*Bahr*-en-Nil). The intriguer of the period being Sheger-ed-dur, the widow of the monarch, who married one of the Mamelukes, Moez-eddin-aibek-el-Turcomany, who became the first of these Bahrite Sultans

and was himself murdered in the Castle of Cairo through this woman. The fact was, that she managed to rule Egypt with an absolute sway, being a woman of great talent, and acted quite independently of her husband, who was not in her political confidence. She had compelled him to divorce another wife, who was the mother of his favourite son, and having refused to tell him where she kept the treasures of her former husband he resolved to try and get her out of the palace and procure her confinement in his minister's house. This occasioned a matrimonial rupture, and Moez resided for a few days at a kiosk, outside the Bab-el-Louk.

He was at length persuaded by this woman Sheger-ed-dur (literally, tree of pearls) to return, which she did, and posted five assassins to murder him as soon as he entered his bath. No sooner was the door shut upon him by one Musheen than these fellows rushed upon Moez, one seizing him by the throat and another by his leg. Moez screamed for help, calling Sheger-ed-dur, his wife, who told the assassins to give up the idea of murdering him, but

Musheen said sharply to her, "If we spare him now, he will spare neither you nor us." And thus perished the first of the Bahrite or Turkish Sultans. His wife then sent to Izzeden the finger and ring of Moez, and said, "Seize the authority," but he was afraid, and the castle being thronged with the Mamelukes of Moez, they tortured the slaves to make them confess the truth. They then intended to murder Sheger-ed-dur, but she was protected and thrown into a tower. She was then brought before the mother of the young prince, the son of Moez, and was beaten so violently by their slippers and clogs that she died next day.

The principal figure in the latter part of the thirteenth century is that of the renowned Sultan Daher, commonly called Bibars, who was a man of tall stature, black hair, and blue eyes, one of them having a little speck in it; his voice was strong, his body muscular, and his activity amazing, not only in the camp and field, but in the cabinet, for he never allowed a dispatch to be twenty-four hours

received without being answered. He was not of a generous nature like Saladin, but was a very strict Moslem, being an enemy of music and wine.

Most of his time was passed in Syria; and history records his great victories not only over the Christians, remaining in that country, but over a still more formidable enemy, the Tartars, who, under Holagu, swept like a torrent over that country. The Tartars being opposed to the Moslems and Mameluke Sultans, had the Christians for their allies; and if I may be allowed a digression from Cairo to Damascus, it is curious to see what efforts were made by these Tartars to keep the Christians in good humour, and how haughty and insolent the latter became, after receiving a diploma of protection from the Tartar prince. Wine was drunk publicly during the days of Ramadan, and spilt at the doors of the mosques. Holagu himself treated the complaints of the Moslems with contempt; and the other Tartar general, Ketboga, used to go into the Christian churches. On the other hand, the heads of captive Tartars

used to garnish the gates of the Castle of Cairo ; and no sooner were the Tartars beaten, than the Christian churches of St. James and St. Mary, at Damascus, were burnt. At this time, the staple manufacture of Damascus was not only silk dresses, but, particularly, cross-bows, which were sought for over all the East. Its bookselling trade was also very considerable, for, when a few years afterwards, its book bazaar was burnt, we find that the Strahan, Tonson, and Lintot of those times, Shems-eddin, lost fifteen thousand volumes.

I have already said, that the Mameluke Sultans, on the fall of the Fatimite dynasty, acknowledged the Caliphate of Bagdad ; and we find, that in the year 1261, Mostanser Billah, then Caliph, paid a visit to Cairo, and was received by the Sultan Daher Bibars with great honour, all Cairo going out to receive him ; the Jewish procession bearing the Pentateuch, and the Christian one the Four Gospels. The Caliph entered by the Gate of Succour, or Bab-el-Nasr ; and the Abbaside colour being black, he gave Bibars a black turban with gold

stripes, a violet robe, and a gold collar. The Caliph himself rode a white horse, with a black housing.

There can be no doubt, that at that period a firm belief in Islamism was associated with a much more exemplary life than we afterwards find recorded. In fact, the life of Daher seems to have been almost entirely divided between religious exercises and the duties of the camp, the only amusement in which he indulged being hunting. We find, that in 1629, he was present at a *battue*, in which three hundred gazelles, and fifteen ostriches, were killed or taken. Daher was also the constructor of one of the largest mosques in Cairo,* situated to the north of the town, the spot being selected by himself, who said, "I cannot find a better place for religion, than that on which I used to divert myself with jousting." It was built in the year 1266, and the marbles with which it was paved, were for the most part taken from Jaffa, which had recently been evacuated by the Franks.

* The Mosque of Daher is not far from the Long Garden, and is of a square form, almost rivalling in extent

Daher died at Damascus in the year 1277, and his tomb is certainly the most solid and respectable piece of masonry in that metropolis.

We now come to Kalaon, another prince, who, in warlike qualities, was not equal to Saladin or Daher, but occupies the third rank in a summary of the meritorious Mameluke Sultans; but he was a very different man from Daher. He was of a more generous and charitable disposition, very warlike and chivalrous; but his religious sentiment was much more lax, so that, on his accession in 1279, wine was drunk publicly, but from the number of drunkards that appeared, he was compelled to forbid it again. Kalaon was broad-shouldered and short-

those of Hakem and Touloun, but like those once splendid constructions, it is a ruin. From being a mosque of the first order, it became in the time of the French, *Fort Sulkowsky*, named after that lively Pole, who spoke so many languages, and is now reduced to the humble use of a government bakehouse, countless *ardebs* of corn being now made into round cakes, where half a century ago the tricoloured flag waved. It still bears the inscription, "In the name of the most merciful God, this sacred vault was raised by our lord, the Sultan Daher, the corner of the world, and of religion, (Rokn-ed Dunia-wu-ed-Din, a curious alliteration). The Sultan of Islam in the year 662 of the Hegira."

necked. He spoke Turkish beautifully, but very little Arabic; and if we include his son, Mohammed El Nasr, and his grandson, Sultan Hassan, it may be said that no family has done so much for the architectural splendour of Cairo as that of this monarch.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF CAIRO.

There is usually a luminous spot in the dark history of all empires, when, after a long period of war, the conquest of foreign foes, and the consolidation of domestic rule, enable a powerful and enlightened sovereign to turn his attention to the arts. The age of the Kalaon family is the golden one of the Mameluke Sultans—the prime of their imperial life—when valour and vigour were not passed away, and decrepitude had not yet begun. These Sultans had too much of the reality of barbarism, and of the varnish of civilization, to permit us to compare their age to either the Italy of the classics, or of the revival, but, compared with the other periods of Egyptian history, and with

all Europe, it was Augustan. It was Kalaon that followed up with vigour the policy of Saladin and Bibars. He finally expelled the Franks from Syria, and the rebuilding of the castles, walls, towers, and gates of Damascus, Aleppo, and other places in Syria, in so picturesque a style, date, as numerous inscriptions testify, principally from the reign of Kalaon; all these gigantic works being undertaken after the capture of Acre by him, in order to render subsequent Crusades abortive; for, in consequence of Cyprus remaining in Latin hands, the towns of the coast were open to succours, long after the interior was exclusively Moslem.

The principal edifice erected by Kalaon, in Cairo, was the Great Hospital, called the Marristan, which had been the locality of the House of Sitt-el-Molk, the sister of the Caliph Hakem, who had brought about his death. This edifice was built in the year 682 of the Hegira, the cause of Kalaon's building it having been the cure of a disease effected on him in the Marristan, or Hospital of Damascus, which had been built by Noureddin and Saladin, and he

swore, that if ever he had the power, he would build a similar establishment.* His work was aided by a casket of jewels, of considerable value, having been found as they were digging for the fountain, no doubt having been concealed by some princess of the Fatimite dynasty, and the value of which was said to have been nearly as much as the cost of building, for a considerable portion of the palace of Sitt-el-Molk was retained.

I think it highly probable that Frank architects or builders may have been employed in the edifices erected hereabouts by Kalaon and

* This edifice exists to this day in a dilapidated state in Damascus, and I am much surprised at not having fallen in with any account of it in Oriental books of travel. The entrance gate is one of the greatest curiosities in Syria, it is of perfectly preserved Roman architecture of the third or fourth century, and above it is a stalactite superstructure of Saracenic architecture ; the whole aspect being an odd jumble of a reminiscence of Diocletian and Saladin. It will be asked why did I not, in my own "Modern Syrians," notice this and other matters? my answer is, that that work was directed rather to illustrate the curiosities of Eastern manners, particularly the mysteries of the Druses, rather than Archæology. But numerous as are the works that have already appeared on Syria, and monthly as such volumes issue from the press, a good book on the Archæology of the Saracenic period is much wanted.

his son, for a portal on the great line of bazaars, is as like Gothic as possible. Most of the materials were taken from the ruins of buildings in the island of Rodah, and every one passing was obliged to carry a stone, so that the road was deserted. In this matter there appears to have been more vain-glory on the part of Kalaon than charity. It does not appear who was in possession of the palace of Sitt-el-Molk at the period in question, but it is certain that it was pounced upon by force, and the Ulema made great obstacles to consecrating the contiguous mosque, as the ground that it had been built on had been taken by force, and the edifice reared by compulsory labour; but the argument of the Mamelukes of Kalaon was, that the prior possession had been obtained by force; and secondly, that there was no instance of getting people to work in Egypt without compulsion.

The deed of settlement and endowment states, that it is "for the aid and cure of all—of the king and of the slave (Malek-wu-Memlook, literally possessor and possessed), private

and commander, (or trooper and emir), great men and small men, free and bond, masculine and feminine." He then appointed physicians, servants, and attendants, male and female, and laid down beds for the sick, with four wards adapted to the climate, one for ophthalmia, one for dysentery, one for the wounded, and one for fever;—and moreover, a kitchen, laboratory, and dispensary for out-door patients, even those sick at home and unable to attend the dispensary, were assisted from this place; and the consumption of sugar alone was five hundred pounds daily. The mosque was also liberally endowed, an edifice which the traveller may remember by its fine antique columns, adapted by the architect. It had a complete establishment of inspectors, Imams, Muezzins, and readers of the Koran, including six librarians.

In short, all the accounts agree in this having been a magnificent establishment. But as time rolled on the funds were gradually dissipated by unfaithful trustees, and at last it became one of the lions of Cairo, for the maniacs were kept chained in dens like wild

beasts, until by the exertions of Clot Bey, in our own time, a more suitable asylum was provided for those unhappy persons, with a treatment more in accordance with the humanity of modern notions in relation to the insane.

Mohammed-el-Nasr, the son of old Kalaon, not having the incubus of such formidable Frank wars to sustain as Saladin, Bibars, and his father, turned his attention to the decoration of Cairo, which in his time was beautified and extended in all directions. The wealthy emirs were incited by the monarch to build mosques and palaces, which should surpass all others in the Moslem world in the elegance of their proportions, and the elaboration of their details. The taste of the architects of this period underwent a complete revolution; instead of gypsum with Cufic inscriptions covering the mosques, as was the style of the Fatimites and Eyoubites, solid masonry, combined with florid tracery in freestone, united durability with elegance; and it was in the mosque of Sultan Hassan, the son of Mohammed-el-Nasr, and grandson of Kalaon, that the architectural

school of this period attained its highest perfection.

Sultan Hassan ascended the throne at thirteen years of age, on Tuesday the 14th of Ramadan, 748 of the Hegira, having succeeded his brother Mozaffer, and, thus young, mounted his horse in equivalency to our coronation, and rode wearing the royal robes, accompanied by the Emirs; but his reign was much chequered. One year the Nile was low, and they wished to bar it, so as to force the water into the canals of the Delta, but could not succeed; the consequence was a scarcity. Sultan Hassan had red hair, and was tolerably energetic and courageous, and a pious Moslem, never having drunk wine or committed carnal sin, in consequence of an oath or pledge which he made; but by his lawful wives, he left issue ten sons and six daughters. His religion went the length of fanaticism — he disliked the Copts so much that he fain would have extirpated them. He also disliked the Mamelukes, and showed a great disposition to employ Arab Moslems; but this policy was unsuccess-

ful, and he was dethroned and imprisoned three years, three months, and fourteen days, having employed himself in reading and writing during the period, for he was not a mere illiterate Turkish Mameluke Sultan, but had drunk deep of Arab civilization. His second government lasted six years, seven months, and seven days, when having had a feud with the powerful Emir Yelbogha, he went to hide himself in the house of a friend, who betrayed him ; but the particulars of his death are not known with precision. His age was then twenty-seven.

The celebrated mosque which bears his name, and of which we have given some account in describing the environs of Hosh Bardak, was begun in the year 757 of the Flight, or 1356 of the Christian era, when he was only twenty-two years of age, on a spot of ground which belonged to the Emir Yelbogha. It took thirteen years in building, having cost each day a thousand mithkals of gold. The great alcoves, sixty-five cubits long and broad, "being larger," says Makrizi, "than that of Chosroes the Persian, by five cubits, while," says he, not knowing what

was rearing at Florence while he wrote, by the genius of a Brunellescho,—"the dome is not paralleled by anything in Egypt, Syria, Irac, Morocco, and Yemen."

All around the mosque are the college buildings, for it was a seminary as well as a mosque, eight stories high. He intended it to have four minarets, three of which were finished, one having fallen on Saturday the 6th of Rabi-el-Ahar, 762, in the great earthquake—and on this day took place those great slits in the wall, and breaks in the cornice, still visible—the fall of the minaret having killed three hundred children in the orphan school. This took place five years after the foundation stone had been laid, and was considered a bad omen by this superstitious people, who began to speak ill of Sultan Hassan, and predicted the end of his reign; and sure enough thirty-three days afterwards the news was spread abroad that he had disappeared and had been murdered. His eunuch, Beshir, completed the mosque; but large sums that had been endowed by Hassan for this object, were withheld by his successors.

The mosque of Sultan Hassan is in a somewhat ruinous condition, for, being opposite to the citadel, it was invariably occupied during the innumerable rebellions which reproduced themselves in Cairo, from that period to our own, and the wonder is that it stands at all; it was used in this way in the time of Daher Barkouk, the first of the Circassian Sultans, who caused the stairs that led to the roof to be pulled down; the steps, however, were built up again, but the magnificent bronze gate that now adorns the mosque of Moyyed originally belonged to the mosque of Sultan Hassan. This edifice is certainly the grandest, noblest, and most severe of the edifices of Cairo, although injured in effect by the mishaps of its minarets, one of which is taller than the other, but in elegance and airy lightness it certainly is inferior to the mosque of Moyyed.

On the fall of the Turkish Sultans followed the third or last dynasty, — the Circassian Sultans, the first of whom was Barkouk, whose mosque on the high street of Cairo, is even

surpassed by his tomb on the Desert, to the north of Cairo. The warlike vigour of the Mamelukes rapidly declined, in consequence of their living in the town and yielding to its corruptions, but the architectural school of Cairo being now formed, distinguished itself by that lightness and elegance of character, distinct and peculiar to itself, of which so many specimens are visible, not only in Cairo itself, such as the mosques of Moyyed, and that fantastic construction, called the Ghoreey, but the numerous tombs of the cities of the dead.

The locality of the mosque of Moyyed was at first a prison in which this Sultan was incarcerated, and having been so severely bitten by vermin he vowed that if ever he came to power he would build a mosque on this spot, which he did, with such taste and magnificence, that it was said, he that sees it will despise the throne of Sheba, and the Hall of Chosroes, and conclude that the constructor was the master of the kings of his time. It was begun in the year 818 of the Hegira,

that is, 1416, of the Christian era, by pulling down the Khan Sunkor, five hundred camels and donkeys being employed during its construction, the clearing away of the rubbish having alone occupied two months. The great bronze gate, as well as the magnificent bronze lantern, was transferred hither from the mosque of Sultan Hassan, not a very kingly proceeding it must be admitted, and all the books in the libraries of the Castle of Cairo were transferred hither, it being the design of the Sultan to make it the most perfect establishment of the kind; and when the mosque was finished the Sultan Moyyed gave a grand dinner in it, the fountain for ablution being filled with sherbet instead of common water, and at the repast the Sultan sat on the left hand of the place of the Imam, and his son on the right hand.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

The Sultan el-Ghoury, who lived so recently as the beginning of the sixteenth century, may almost be called the last of the Mameluke Sultans in Egypt, he having had a mere shadow of a successor, the conquest of Egypt and Syria by Sultan Selim the Great having taken place in 1517; for at the decisive battle which took place between the troops of the Circassian Sultans, and those of the Emperor of Constantinople, the forces of the south succumbed, the Sultan el-Ghoury being then and there killed. This issue of affairs can surprise no one; it was the presence of the chivalry of Europe in the Holy Land and the pressing dangers of a Frank do-

mination, that created the Great Military School of Saladin, Bibars, and Kalaon, and the removal of this opposition isolated Egypt and Syria from the politics and wars of the world. The Mameluke Sultans thenceforward, instead of aspiring to naval power like the Algerines, were contented to have the Venetians as their carriers, treating them, to be sure, with great insolence, and taking away the main-sail and rudder of every ship that entered the port of Alexandria, on arrival, a most humiliating proceeding, and allowing them to depart when they chose, and how they chose, sometimes seizing all their strong boxes, taking the merchants to Cairo, and threatening to get the Genoese instead, to serve the trade, so that their wars were, for the most part, intestine ones of petty ambition.

Quite different from this vegetating state was the military power of the sons of Erthogrul, who, step by step inundated the south-east of Europe, and carried their capitals successively from Konieh to Broussa, from Broussa to Adrianople, and at length planted the Crescent

in the city of the Eastern Cæsars. Macedonia, Servia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Albania were subjected to the sway of the sultans. It was war on a grand scale from generation to generation, until at length all succumbed, except the Republic of Venice, the German Empire, and the Kingdom of Poland. When, therefore, in 1517, nine years before the fall of Hungary, the troops of the Mameluke Sultans encountered those of Selim, it was a decadent school of arms encountering one in its prime and vigour; the termination of these dynasties was therefore an accident only in appearance, and, in reality, the long prepared result of the contrast we have indicated.

If we survey the whole battle-field of Frank and Moslem at this period, we find that the brunt was sustained ultimately by the Turks. The great left wing in Spain, is, in the end of the fifteenth century, driven from Granada backwards into Africa; but thirty-four years afterwards, the right wing, composed of Turkish forces, burst forward over Hungary, and thundered up to the very gate of Vienna, while

the Mediterranean intervened to prevent the centre from acting otherwise than by a maritime warfare, which left as little permanent impression on the adjoining shores as the vessels did on the seas which they furrowed.

It was after the Turkish conquest that Egypt was divided into twenty-four districts, ruled by twenty-four Mamelukes, according to the Turkish policy, *divide et impera*, seven of which Beys formed the Divan of Cairo, under the Pasha sent by the Ottoman Sultan. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Pashalic was a reality, but after that period, when the power of the Porte began to decline, and Austria and Russia pressed hard upon her northern frontiers, her government of Egypt became more or less nominal, and such was the state of affairs up to the period of the eventful history which we have just recorded.

THE END.

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